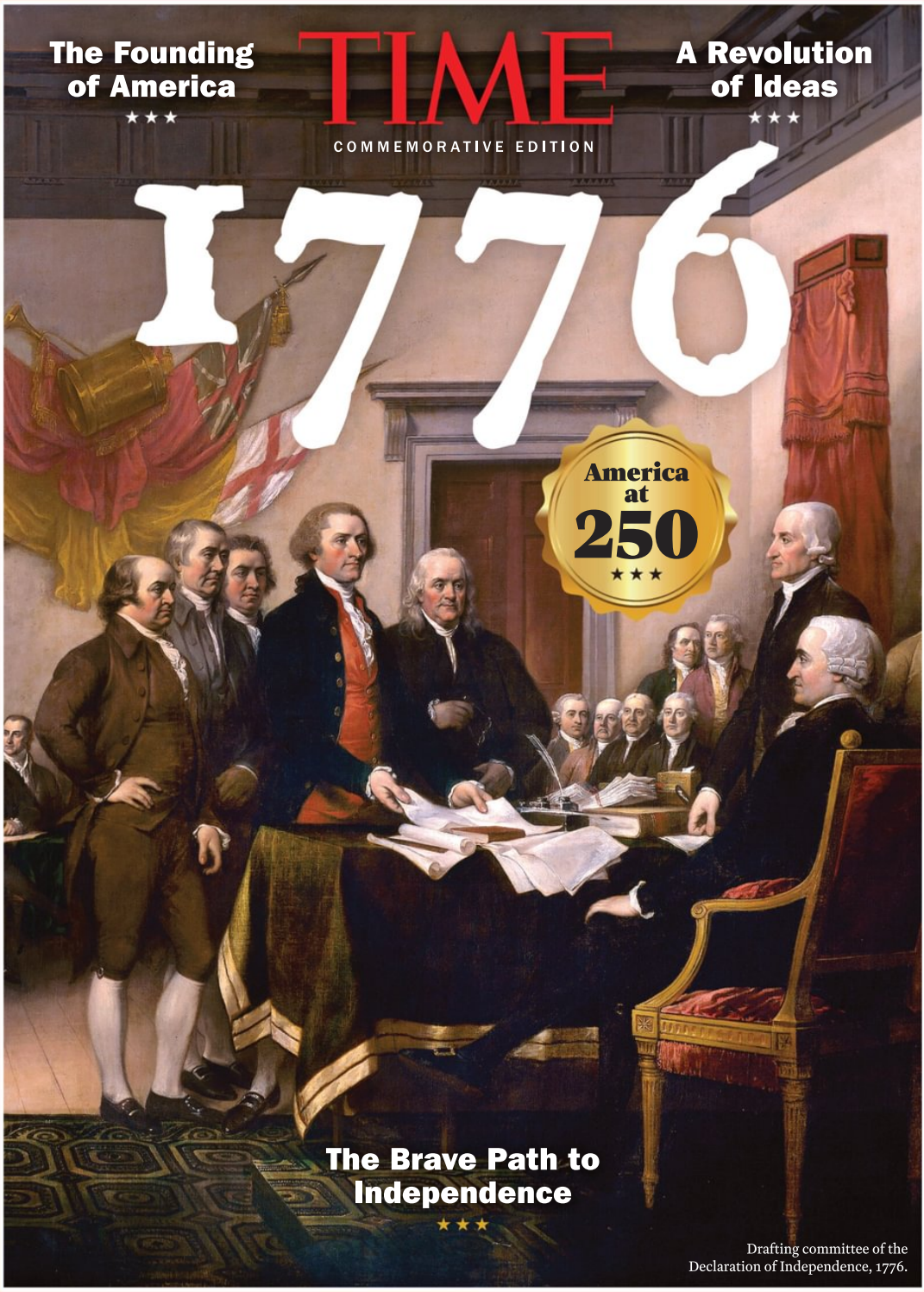
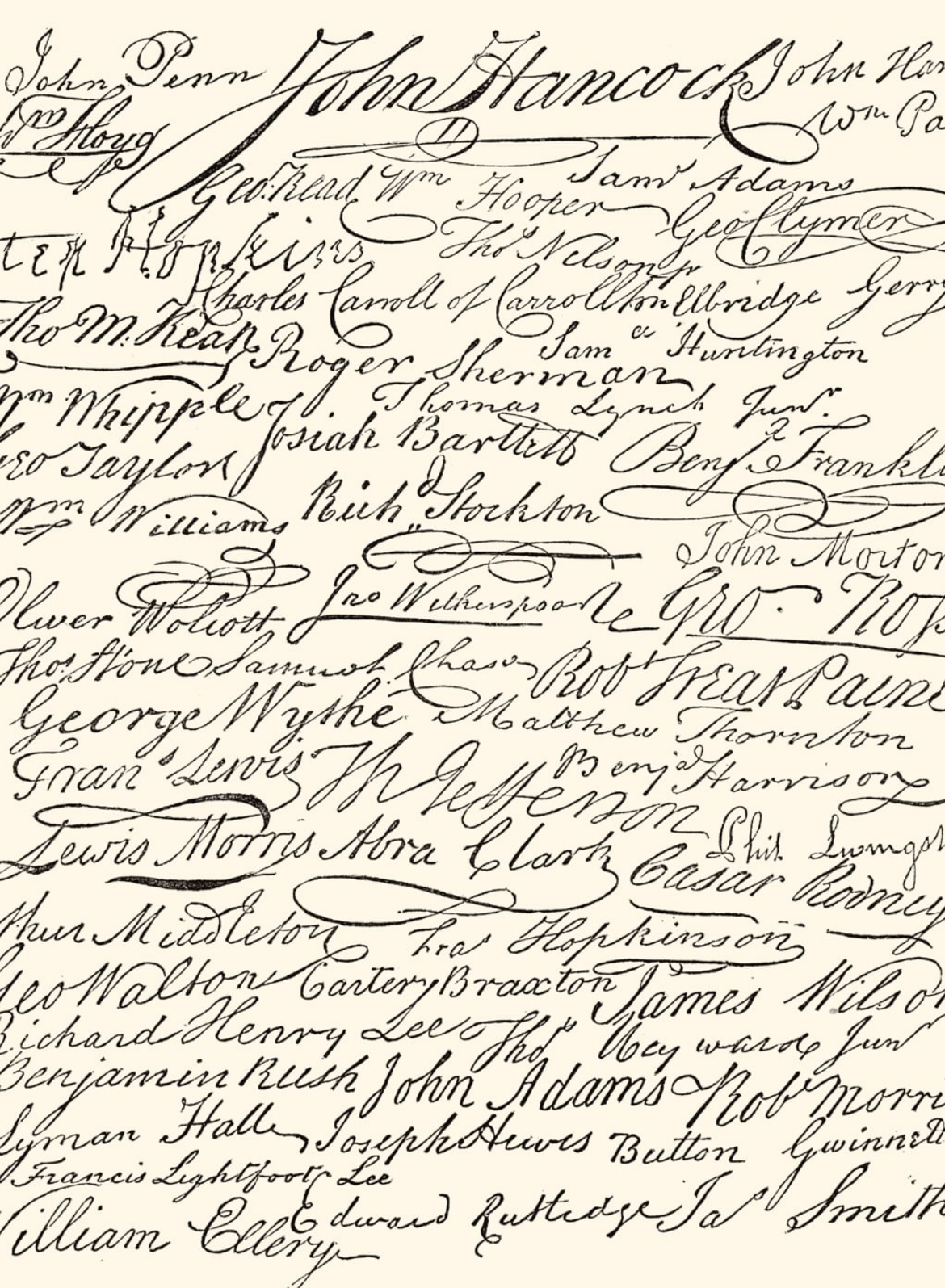


Drafting committee of the Declaration of Independence, 1776.



John Penn John Hancock John Han
Wm Floyd Wm Pa
Geo Read Wm Hooper Sam Adams
Geo Clymer
Ter Hopkins Thos Nelson Jr
Charles Carroll of Carrollton Elbridge Gerry
Tho M. Kean Roger Sherman Sam Huntington
Wm Whipple Thomas Lynch Junr
Geo Taylor Josiah Bartlett Benj Frankl
Wm Williams Richd Stockton
John Morton
Oliver Wolcott Jno Witherspoon Geo Ros
Thos Stone Samuel Chase Robt Treat Paine
George Wythe Matthew Thornton
Frans Lewis Th Jefferson Benjd Harrison
Lewis Morris Abra Clark Phil Livingst
Casar Rodney
Thur Middleton Fras Hopkinson
Geo Walton Carter Braxton James Wilson
Richard Henry Lee Thos Heyward Junr
Benjamin Rush John Adams Robt Morris
Lyman Hall Joseph Hewes Button Gwinnett
Francis Lightfoot Lee
William Ellery Edward Rutledge Jas Smith

TIME

1776

British and American forces clashed atop Breed's Hill during the Battle of Bunker Hill.

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The Birth of an Idea

HOW THE EVENTS OF 1776 AND THE CONCEPT OF FREEDOM SPREAD AROUND THE WORLD.

BY DANIEL S. LEVY

Thomas Jefferson and the rest of the Committee of Five presented their draft of the Declaration of Independence to John Hancock, president of the Second Continental Convention, on June 28, 1776.

IN 1822, JOHN ADAMS WROTE TO Timothy Pickering, his former secretary of state, and recalled how, in June 1776, he and Thomas Jefferson, along with Benjamin Franklin, Robert Livingston, and Roger Sherman, were tasked with creating the Declaration of Independence. Adams knew that Jefferson should be the one to draft the document and explained to Jefferson why he was the most suited: "You are a Virginian, and Virginia ought to appear at the head of this business. I am obnoxious, suspected, and unpopular; you are very much otherwise." And most important, "You can write ten times better than I can."

"Well, if you are decided," Jefferson responded, "I will do as well as I can."

There had been some talk of independence up to then. Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* had appeared in January, and it put forth a passionate case for why the colonies should secede: "For God's sake, let us come to a final separation.... The birthday of a new world is at hand." Yet when Jefferson and the 55 other delegates gathered in Philadelphia during the hot summer of 1776, nothing was preordained. Jefferson had to help change their minds. Working out of rooms a few blocks from what is now known as Independence Hall, he got to work. In just over two weeks, Jefferson formed the three-part document, a preamble, a list of King George III's sins, and the last proclaiming that America was now a group of "Free and Independent States." Then, with Adams and the other members of the Committee of Five, he revised it. Franklin, for one, admired the beauty of Jefferson's words, and the newspaper editor in him simply made a few modifications, most notably changing Jefferson's "We hold these truths to be sacred and undeniable" to "We hold these truths to be self-evident."

For two days, Congress debated the contents, and on July 4, they adopted it. With one vote they went from being subjects to independent citizens. It was a treasonous act: Franklin remarked, "We must all hang together, or most assuredly we shall all hang separately."

The 1,300-word parchment is the seminal document of the United States, America's birth certificate. It is also America's divorce papers, ending the familial attachment to Great Britain and making the group of 13 individual colonies a loosely bonded family. As Jefferson noted 50 years later, the simple object of the Declaration was "to place before mankind the common sense of the subject [in] terms so plain and firm as to command their assent, and to justify ourselves in the independent stand we [were] compelled to take." As an Enlightenment ideal, it set down the belief that government earns its power from the people and laid out the inherent rights of Americans. In doing so, it became the nation's raison d'être, and it and the American Revolution have in the following 250 years become a template of a struggle that others have taken inspiration from, offering a philosophy of universal human rights.

> "THIS BALL OF LIBERTY, I BELIEVE . . . IS NOW SO WELL IN MOTION THAT IT WILL ROLL ROUND THE GLOBE."
>
> —THOMAS JEFFERSON TO TENCH COXE, JUNE 1, 1795

Word of the events in Philadelphia and copies of the Declaration quickly made their way across the Atlantic. While the British mocked the rebellious Americans, the Americans' idea sparked the dream of freedom in others. In France, it inspired the French Revolution and the creation of the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen of 1789*. The Marquis de Lafayette, who had fought with George Washington during the America Revolution, drafted it with the help of Jefferson, who was then the American minister to France. Its first article states quite clearly, "Men are born and remain free and equal in rights." The chaos of the Terror, though, soon gripped France, and Lafayette was imprisoned for five years.

While events turned out badly in France, less than 20 years after Jefferson wrote his immortal words, he marveled in a letter to former assistant secretary of the treasury Tench Coxe, "This ball of liberty, I believe . . . is now so well in motion that it will roll round the globe." There is, of course, irony in Jefferson's embrace of freedom. The man who wrote that "all men are created equal" enslaved more than 600 people over the course of his life. Yet despite his moral failings, others sought to put his words into action, with Venezuela splitting from Spain in 1811 and proclaiming that "the virtuous People of Venezuela DO declare solemnly to the world, that its united Provinces are, and ought to be, from this day, by act and right, Free, Sovereign, and Independent States." In 1847, Liberia, which was founded in western Africa by former enslaved Americans, issued its own declaration: "We recognize in all men certain inalienable rights; among these are life, liberty, and the right to acquire, possess, enjoy, and defend property."

Many others have harked back to Jefferson's words, not just to forge a new nation. Sometimes it was a cause. In 1848, at the Women's Rights Convention in Seneca Falls, New York, Elizabeth Cady

At the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom on August 28, 1963, Martin Luther King Jr. invoked the Declaration's promise of freedom.

Stanton launched the women's suffrage movement that would lead to the right to vote for women by issuing the Declaration of Rights and Sentiments, which stated that "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men and women are created equal."

Jefferson's words continued to inspire. Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian National Congress issuing the Declaration of Sovereignty and Self-Rule in 1930 in Lahore, Pakistan—which was then part of India. In 1945, Ho Chi Minh, who would later lead the battle against America during the Vietnam War, was seeking to throw off the yoke of France colonialism. Ho quoted Jefferson's "Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness" in the Declaration of Independence of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. He followed it up with "This means: All the peoples on the earth are equal from birth, all the peoples have a right to live, to be happy and free."

Those notions echoed in other movements against oppression, whether it was Martin Luther King Jr. speaking in 1963 from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial about how "I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal.'" Or gay-rights activist Harvey Milk, a decade later, saying, "All men are created equal, and they are endowed with certain inalienable rights . . . that's what America is. No matter how hard you try, you cannot erase those words from the Declaration of Independence."

While Americans don't always appreciate the Declaration and the rights they possess, they do intrinsically know that they have them. President Ronald Reagan commented during a visit to Shanghai in 1984 that the Declaration is inscribed on our hearts: "Take an American student or teacher aside later today and ask if he or she hasn't committed those words to memory. They are from the document by which we created our nation."

Since Jefferson wrote it in 1776, some 120 nations and people have drawn on the ideas of the Declaration and the American Revolution. Even now, 250 years later, as we celebrate America's semiquincentennial with barbecues and parades and fireworks, we look back on that struggle, that war, and that document as a glorious success that resulted in our unique and ongoing experiment. What transpired in Philadelphia has endured and continues to define us. □

1763 – 1789

CHRONOLOGY OF INDEPENDENCE

With their rights slowly being taken away, America's once loyal British subjects became radicalized and fought for freedom.

1765

MARCH 22, 1765

Seeking to raise £60,000 a year, Parliament passes the Stamp Act, requiring payment for revenue stamps on all newspapers, pamphlets, almanacs, legal documents, playing cards, and dice. Sons of Liberty clubs form in Boston and elsewhere to resist the act.

OCTOBER 1765

Delegates from nine colonies meet at a Stamp Act Congress in New York City. They protest against taxation without representation and resolve not to import any goods that require the payment of a duty.

1770

MARCH 5, 1770

A confrontation between soldiers and a crowd in Boston leads to the death of five civilians. The first killed is Crispus Attucks, a sailor of mixed African and Indigenous ancestry. Samuel Adams, Paul Revere, and other patriotic radicals denounce it as a "Massacre."

1772

SPRING 1772

Committees of Correspondence are formed to organize American response to British policy.

1774

FALL 1774

In response to the Boston Tea Party, Parliament's Intolerable Acts strip Massachusetts of its rights, leading to the gathering of the First Continental Congress in Philadelphia.

1775

1763

FEBRUARY 10, 1763

After years of battle, the French and Indian War, also known as the Seven Years' War, ends. France cedes to Britain all of its claims in Canada, as well as the Louisiana territories. The war adds £133 million to Britain's national debt.

1766

MARCH 18, 1766

The Stamp Act is repealed, thanks largely to Benjamin Franklin.

1767

JUNE 29, 1767

The Townshend Revenue Act requires colonists to pay import duties on tea, glass, paints, oil, lead, and paper.

1772

After the *Gaspee,* a British schooner, runs aground in Rhode Island, it is attacked by merchants.

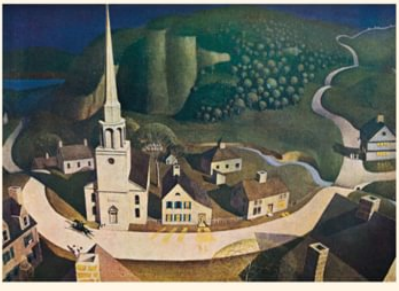
1773

DECEMBER 16, 1773

In protest over the East India Company's monopoly on tea exports to America, revolutionaries dress as Native Americans, board three ships in Boston Harbor, and dump 342 chests of tea into the water.

MARCH 23, 1775

Patrick Henry denounces British rule and declares, "Give me liberty or give me death!"



APRIL 18, 1775

Paul Revere makes his historic ride.

1775

APRIL 19, 1775

The first shots of the Revolutionary War are fired at Lexington and Concord.

MAY 10, 1775

Colonel Ethan Allen and Benedict Arnold seize Fort Ticonderoga.

JUNE 15, 1775

Congress appoints George Washington commander of the Continental Army.

1776

JANUARY 10, 1776

Thomas Paine publishes *Common Sense*, the first important demand for independence of the colonies.

DECEMBER 1777

The British capture Philadelphia following the Battle of Brandywine. Meanwhile, Washington heads to Valley Forge, 20 miles away, where his troops spend six months and are drilled and trained.

1778

FEBRUARY 6, 1778

The French sign the Treaty of Alliance and the Treaty of Amity and Commerce with America and start supplying their forces.

1780

SEPTEMBER 21, 1780

General Benedict Arnold betrays his nation by agreeing to surrender West Point in exchange for £20,000 pounds and a British military command.

1782

1782

Some 100,000 British loyalists start to evacuate the colonies.

1783

SEPTEMBER 3, 1783

The Treaty of Paris officially ends the American Revolution.

1787

OCTOBER 27, 1787

Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, and James Madison start publishing the *Federalist Papers* in order to encourage the ratification of the U.S. Constitution.

JUNE 17, 1775

The Battle of Bunker Hill is the first major fight of the war.

AUGUST 23, 1775

George III proclaims that Americans have "proceeded to open and avowed Rebellion."

JULY 4, 1776

The Declaration of Independence is officially approved by the Continental Congress, and its president, John Hancock, orders it "proclaimed in each of the united states."

DECEMBER 25, 1776

Washington crosses the Delaware River in a surprise attack on Hessian troops and wins the Battle of Trenton.

1777

SEPTEMBER 19, 1777

Generals Horatio Gates and Benedict Arnold win the Battle of Saratoga.

1781

MARCH 1, 1781

The Articles of Confederation are ratified.

OCTOBER 19, 1781

The British, under General Charles Cornwallis, are defeated by Washington at Yorktown.

1789

MARCH 4, 1789

The U.S. Constitution goes into effect.

APRIL 30, 1789

Washington is sworn in as the first president of the United States of America.

★ ★ ★

CHAPTER ONE

1763 – 1775

The Road to Revolution

As Britain celebrated its success in the French and Indian War, it needed a way to pay for it. Parliament taxed the 13 colonies, and Americans began to question their place in the empire.

The British won the Battle of Quebec on the Plains of Abraham on September 13, 1759, but both French general Louis-Joseph de Montcalm (pictured here) and British general James Wolfe were mortally wounded.

From Loyalists to Revolutionaries

BRITISH MISSTEPS SET THE COLONISTS ON THEIR FATEFUL PATH TO INDEPENDENCE.

BY CHRIS NASHAWATY

ON FEBRUARY 10, 1763, A BATTERED and bloody curtain finally closed on the French and Indian War with the signing of the Treaty of Paris. The British Army, with the incalculable assistance of loyalist militias from the American colonies as well as the Iroquois Confederacy, had triumphed over the French in their mutual quest for empire. After nine long winters of freezing hardship that had claimed the lives of more than 11,000 soldiers, victory in what is also known as the Seven Years' War was at hand. But rather than ushering in an era of lasting peace and prosperity in the new world, the closing act of one conflict simply marked the prelude of another.

As its spoils of war, the British Crown had taken possession of nearly all of Canada, as well as the western territories of America that stretched to the Mississippi River. To many colonists, removing the French threat was a cause for celebration. It also seemed like a moment of limitless opportunity. After all, the frontier was now there for the taking.

Paul Revere created this engraving, "The Bloody Massacre in King-Street." It was an effective piece of propaganda.

However, victory had come with a cost. The prolonged campaign had saddled Britain with a crushing £133 million in debt, and the upbeat sentiment would be short-lived as King George III began to shift the Crown's financial burden onto the backs of the colonists. Faced with the challenges of governing and defending its newly enlarged territories, the rigid and politically tone-deaf British prime minister, George Grenville, urged Parliament to impose a crippling series of taxes and duties on the American subjects. Three thousand miles away, the war-weary colonists seemed genuinely mystified as to how this could be. They'd sacrificed their lives and spilled their blood for the Crown, and now they were being asked to pay for that privilege.

Eight months after the Peace of Paris formalized the end of the French and Indian War, King George issued the Proclamation of 1763, forbidding the colonists from settling west of the Appalachian Mountains. In theory, the measure was meant to stabilize relations with the Indigenous Native American nations, but the colonists saw it as a true betrayal. They believed that they'd more than earned the right to grow. It would prove to be the first in what would become a string of perceived humiliations aimed their way like the barrel end of a redcoat's musket.

JAMES OTIS, AN ALL-AROUND FIREBRAND, SPOKE FOR MANY WHEN HE ARGUED WHAT BECAME AN INDELIBLE RALLYING CRY: "TAXATION WITHOUT REPRESENTATION IS TYRANNY."

The next cause for alarm came the following year, with the passage of the Sugar Act of 1764. In addition to its massive debt, Britain's treasury had become strained by the steep cost of stationing troops in the colonies. The Sugar Act would bring in a sorely needed stream of revenue. The members of Parliament believed the colonies had been getting a free ride for too long. And in a way, they weren't wrong. The amount the colonists paid in taxes was a tiny fraction of what British citizens paid.

Needless to say, the colonists didn't see it that way. While the Sugar Act actually lowered the duty on molasses, it simultaneously tightened imperial enforcement by stopping the colonists from smuggling in French and Dutch West Indies supplies, thus expanding the Crown's reach further into their daily lives. The problem wasn't so much the tax itself, but more what it represented: Parliament could now tax the colonies without their consent. They were being treated—and disciplined—like children. James Otis, a lawyer, politician, and all-around firebrand from Massachusetts, spoke for many when he argued what became an indelible rallying cry: "Taxation without representation is tyranny."

Resentment soon turned into resistance, and then into outright rebellion. Before it reached that point, Parliament made another show of power with its passage of the Stamp Act in 1765, forcing colonists to buy only officially embossed stamped paper for newspapers, pamphlets, legal documents, and even playing cards. To many, this seemed more nefarious than just a simple price hike. It was a "direct tax," the first such penalty levied on them. Their fears were now being realized. One of the most eloquent—and fiery—protesters was Patrick Henry, a charismatic young lawyer from Virginia's House of Burgesses, who argued in his Virginia Resolves that only the colonists' own elected representatives could levy taxes. People didn't just listen to Henry; they were energized by his passion. Still, there were some in the crowd who heard treason in his words.

Further north, in Massachusetts, a group of skilled tradesman, artisans, and shopkeepers led by the Boston activist Samuel Adams began meeting in secret to plot the future. They called themselves the Sons of Liberty. Soon, their numbers began to multiply and spread across the land like a brushfire. The group organized street protests and on August 14 burned an effigy of Andrew Oliver, Boston's Stamp Act agent. Thousands in the alcohol-fueled mob then swarmed to Oliver's home and office and ransacked the building. Two weeks later, they demolished the home of Lieutenant Governor Thomas Hutchinson.

Later that year, colonial elites who occupied the middle ground between those who were loyal to the King and the agitating Sons of Liberty gathered in New York for the Stamp Act Congress. There, delegates from nine of the 13 colonies drafted a Declaration of Rights and Grievances, which underscored the no-taxation-without-representation theme.

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Outrage over the 1765 Stamp Act led colonists like these in Boston to publicly burn stamps.

Benjamin Franklin, the postmaster general for the colonies living in England at the time, went before Parliament and asked it to repeal the Stamp Act, reminding the body of the sacrifices the colonists had made in both money and manpower in the war with the French. Franklin also cautioned that if Parliament did not repeal the act, the threat of a popular uprising was not only possible but likely.

The Stamp Act was repealed in 1766, but the celebration in the streets of Boston and Franklin's Philadelphia was fleeting. In fact, Parliament would end up quickly pushing through the Declaratory Act, reasserting its right to legislate for the colonies "in all cases whatsoever." There was no ambiguity to be found. And there would be even less the following year, when British Chancellor of the Exchequer Charles Townshend sought another way to assert the Crown's authority by placing import duties on glass, paint, paper, tea, and other staples.

Known as the Townshend Acts, this broad and onerous tax further heightened anxieties within the colonies. And once again, Boston would become the epicenter of political opposition as leading political lights like Samuel Adams and the wealthy merchant John Hancock proposed a boycott of British goods. Adams helped to draft the Massachusetts Circular Letter, which called on the other colonies to join them in resisting the acts. An incensed Parliament ordered that the letter be rescinded. The protesters refused, and the boycott caused a massive drop in sales of British goods to the northern colonies.

As the Crown began to lose its once ironclad grip on the colonies, it dispatched British troops to Boston in 1768 to restore order. It was a provocative move, and it backfired. Soldiers and civilians regularly clashed in taverns and squares. After a tense period of peace, the colonists' frustrations finally erupted on March 5, 1770, when an argument between British soldiers and Bostonians spiraled out of control. As the locals pelted the redcoats with snowballs and rocks, the soldiers fired a volley of musket balls into the crowd, striking 11. Crispus Attucks, a whaler of African and Native American descent, was the first of five people to die. Attucks became the first martyr of the growing struggle, and what quickly became known as the Boston Massacre proved to be the match that lit the fuse of revolution.

Back in London, the members of Parliament sensed which way the wind was blowing in the colonies. Their unpopular taxes were causing more harm than good. In 1770, most of the Townshend duties were lifted. One that was kept in place, however, was a tax on tea.

In the early days of summer 1772, a Royal Navy schooner, the *HMS Gaspee,* was chasing the *Hannah*, a colonial packet boat that was suspected of smuggling. The *Hannah*'s captain intentionally drew the *Gaspee* into shallow waters off of Warwick, Rhode Island, causing it to run aground. As the *Gaspee* waited for the tide to rise, a band of agitators from Providence rowed out to the ship, boarded it, and proceeded to set the craft on fire. Soon, the *Gaspee* would take on a symbolic power far greater than what had actually transpired. Here was one of the very first acts of intentional political violence against the Crown. It was a fiery and unmistakable harbinger of things to come.

On December 16, 1773, members of the Sons of Liberty dressed up as Mohawks, boarded three ships in Boston Harbor, and dumped 342 chests of tea into the water.

Then, in 1773, Parliament passed the Tea Act. Designed to shore up the struggling British East India Company, the Act allowed the once-mighty trading powerhouse the exclusive right to sell tea directly to the colonies at a reduced but still taxed price. Tax revenue, though, was not the main issue the colonists objected to. Rather, it was the dangerous precendent the Tea Act represented. Acknowledging the Act meant accepting Parliament's right to tax the colonies without their consent. They would be losing their voice. The idea of independence was now being openly discussed in newspapers.

In Boston, the Sons of Liberty saw right through the Crown's gambit and were dead set against allowing any of this tea to be unloaded on their shores. On the evening of December 16, 1773, 150 men, led by Samuel Adams, disguised themselves as Mohawk Indians and at Griffin's Wharf boarded three East India Company ships, the *Dartmouth*, *Eleanor*, and *Beaver*. As thousands watched, they dumped 342 chests of tea into Boston Harbor. The Boston Tea Party, as it would come to be known, put the colonists' revolutionary words into action, an unambiguous act of defiance that echoed into a call to arms.

Parliament wasn't about to sit back and let the Crown be tarnished by an uncouth group of rabble-rousers. Retaliation was swift and severe, arriving in the form of the Intolerable Acts—an assortment of strict taxes that were designed to punish Massachusetts and clarify, once and for all, that the British were the ones in control.

The Intolerable Acts, also known as the Coercive Acts, called for the blockade of the port of Boston until the East India Company was reimbursed for its £10,000 worth of jettisoned tea. King George replaced Royal Governor Thomas Hutchinson with General Thomas Gage, the military governor. Massachusetts was placed under stricter control, and it

A SPY IN THE HOUSE OF LIBERTY

A seemingly loyal revolutionary at the Green Dragon Tavern proved a traitor to the cause.

GROUPS INCLUDING THE Sons of Liberty, the Boston Committee of Correspondence, and the Boston Caucus held top-secret meetings at Boston's Green Dragon Tavern (right), where events such as the Boston Tea Party had been planned. But in 1775, a troubling mystery beset rebel leaders John Hancock, Samuel Adams, Joseph Warren, and Benjamin Church Jr. (above). Details about their gatherings, as well as Massachusetts Provincial Congress business, were being leaked to the British.

Hancock and Adams were devoted rebels and seemed beyond suspicion. Warren and Church, though less famous, were also highly trusted. Church, for one, gave fiery orations, satirized the British in newspapers, and was the first surgeon general. But in September 1775, the Boston leaders learned the truth. Church had been disclosing their secrets to General Thomas Gage, the British commander in chief of North America, apparently for profit. A coded letter Church wrote—and gave to a mistress for delivery—was intercepted. Faced with the evidence, Church claimed his secret letter was intended to scare the British into peace. But the rebels would have none of it. The letter contained such damning statements as "make use of every precaution or I perish." When John Adams learned of the treachery, he wrote, "Good God! What shall we say of human nature?"

After a November court martial, America's first traitor was jailed. In 1778, Church passed from infamy to oblivion when the sloop *Welcome,* carrying him to exile in Martinique, disappeared, never to be seen again.

was announced that British soldiers would from then on be tried in their own country instead of colonial courts. But the most objectionable measure of all was the Quartering Act, which allowed British troops to be housed in private homes.

Rather than bring the colonies to their knees, the Intolerable Acts proved to be just that—intolerable. They united the colonies in resistance as never before. Those leading the struggle had already started Committees of Correspondence to discuss local conditions with their compatriots in other colonies in order to plan their course of action.

In September 1774, delegates from 12 of the colonies (Georgia was the exception) gathered in Philadelphia for the First Continental Congress. The attendees were a who's who of larger-than-life political notables and notables in the making: George Washington and Patrick Henry of Virginia; John and Samuel Adams of Massachusetts; John Jay of New York. Few of the men argued for independence outright at the gathering. Most of them were simply asking for the same rights accorded to Englishmen.

That First Continental Congress would end up calling for economic sanctions against Britain and a boycott of British goods. It also issued a Declaration of Rights and Grievances, which urged King George to step in and convince Parliament to loosen its grip. The King declined, stating, "The die is now cast. The colonies must either submit or triumph." Governor Gage readied his troops to enforce the authority of the Crown. They would be ill prepared for what would come next. □

America's Last King Wasn't the Crazy Tyrant

BY ANDREW ROBERTS

I LOVED *HAMILTON: AN AMERICAN MUSICAL* for its foot-tapping tunes and witty libretto, but it's no more an accurate portrayal of history than Shakespeare's *Richard III* or *Macbeth*. For the cruel prancing camp sadist originally portrayed so memorably by Jonathan Groff is as far removed from the real King George III as it is possible to get.

After two centuries of largely deliberate and highly political misrepresentation, people on both sides of the Atlantic think that because George was a tyrant king and moreover mad with porphyria, Britain lost the American War of Independence. In fact, he firstly wasn't mad with porphyria, secondly he wasn't a tyrant king, thirdly he was perfectly sane throughout the American Revolution, and lastly, he wasn't responsible for Britain's defeat. Four major misunderstandings, all in one sentence, which can now be comprehensively set straight.

The Founding Fathers—whose courage in taking on the world's most powerful empire I greatly admire—saw themselves as revolutionaries in the mould of their heroes, the English revolutionaries of 1642 against Charles II and of 1688 against his son James II. In order to clothe themselves in the revolutionary mantle of these earlier giants, they therefore ideologically had to try to make George III out to be as oppressive as those earlier Stuart despots.

But the truth is that George was simply not tyrannical; rather, he was a good-natured, enlightened constitutional monarch, who inconveniently for the Founders also genuinely admired the Glorious Revolution of 1688 as much as they did—not least because it paved the way for his family to come to the British throne despite his great-grandfather George I only being the fifty-first in line.

In 2015, Queen Elizabeth II released more than 350,000 pages of George III's papers. Expertly curated by the George Papers Programme in London, the documents reveal that the King was a man who was horrified at the concept of royalist tyranny, as practised occasionally on the European continent, and he denounced it at every opportunity. He was so enamored of the Magna Carta and English

King George III (here in a 1763 painting) reigned from 1760 to 1820.

common law that he never considered trying to use extra-legal powers against the American Revolution until the first shots had been fired at Lexington and Concord.

Although the American revolutionaries were right to demand their independence in July 1776, the twenty-eight pseudo-legal arguments that they made against George in their Declaration that month were a farrago of nonsense: inaccurate, repetitious, unfair, and wildly exaggerated political propaganda. But that is no more than one would assume in wartime.

Yet even today, nearly 250 years later, the 28 clauses of the Declaration are still accepted by many Americans as almost Holy Writ in its entirety. The Declaration is read out in some towns on the anniversary of its adoption by the Continental Congress, mixing as it does some gorgeous prose about life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness with the second two-thirds of the document, which is almost totally factually false. Of course, George III also wanted his American subjects to enjoy life, liberty (as he conceived it), and the pursuit of happiness, until such time that roughly one-third of them started to rebel against him. (John Adams estimated that at the Revolution's start another one-third were Loyalists and the last one-third were waiting to see who would win.)

To take some of Jefferson's accusations virtually at random, the second charge was of George having "forbidden his governors to pass laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his assent should be obtained." The law of suspension, necessary because of the distance across the Atlantic, had been in operation since 1708, and was a sensible precaution against laws being overturned months after they had gone into operation. The sixteenth charge attacked the King "for cutting off our trade with all parts of the world." In fact, the navigation and trade laws that restricted colonial commerce dated back to Oliver Cromwell in 1651 and were instrumental in placing the American colonies within the British trading bloc and outside rival ones. All this amounted to in terms of eighteenth-century trade was that the American colonies were part of the British Empire.

The nineteenth charge was, "For transporting us beyond seas to be tried for pretended offences." Although the provision for this had existed since the time of Henry VIII for treason, in fact nobody had been transported for trial in George III's reign. Charge number twenty-one condemned the King "For taking away our charters, abolishing our most valuable laws and altering fundamentally the forms of our governments," referring to the Government of Massachusetts Act of 1774, which was the only alteration of a colonial charter during George's reign and was enacted as a reaction to the rebellion rather than being an incitement of it.

Fortunately for Jefferson, Congress removed the extremely hypocritical clause accusing George of not abolishing the Slave Trade. Unlike 41 out of the 56 signatories of the Declaration of Independence, George III never owned, bought, or sold a slave, and he signed the abolition of the Slave Trade into law in 1807. Moreover, in my research into the George Papers Programme, I discovered a document that he

King George III returning to Windsor Castle after an afternoon of fox hunting.

wrote as Prince of Wales in the 1750s in which he was commenting on Charles de Montesquieu's classic Enlightenment text *The Spirit of the Laws*, originally published in 1748. In it, he described the arguments in favour of slavery as "too absurd to take the trouble of refuting," saying that there were "perhaps sufficient to make us hold such practice in execration."

With mental illness now thankfully and finally destigmatized, and George no longer morally blamed for his madness—which was bipolar disorder and not porphyria—we can at last come to a much more objective judgement of him. It was his ministers, generals, and admirals who lost the American colonies, with George not taking part in grand strategy-making, and going along with Cabinet decisions as a constitutional monarch. He limited his involvement in the war to advising, encouraging, and occasionally warning, whereas Lord North oversaw the defeat, Lord George Germain came up with the overall strategic plan, Sir William Howe failed to stick to it, General Burgoyne got himself captured at Saratoga and General Cornwallis at Yorktown. They deserve the blame for the defeat, and not their occasionally self-righteous but otherwise highly cultured, intelligent, and charming king.

So the next time you watch *Hamilton* on the stage or on video, do sing along with George III's hilarious numbers, but don't go along with its outrageous portrayal of a kind, uxorious, dignified, and much misunderstood monarch. □

FROM *THE LAST KING OF AMERICA: THE MISUNDERSTOOD REIGN OF GEORGE III* BY ANDREW ROBERTS, PUBLISHED BY VIKING, AN IMPRINT OF PENGUIN PUBLISHING GROUP, A DIVISION OF PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE, LLC.
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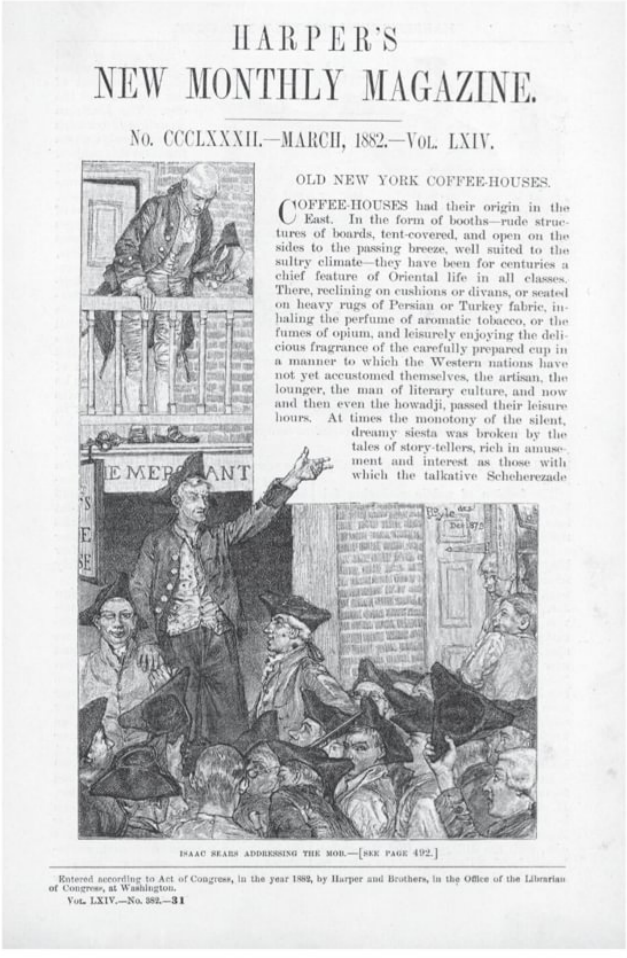
REVOLUTIONARY PERSONALITIES

The cause of liberty divided those in the colonies.

BY COURTNEY MIFSUD INTREGLIA AND DANIEL S. LEVY



HARPER'S
NEW MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

No. CCCLXXXII.—MARCH, 1882.—Vol. LXIV.

OLD NEW YORK COFFEE-HOUSES.

COFFEE-HOUSES had their origin in the East. In the form of booths—rude structures of boards, tent-covered, and open on the sides to the passing breeze, well suited to the sultry climate—they have been for centuries a chief feature of Oriental life in all classes. There, reclining on cushions or divans, or seated on heavy rugs of Persian or Turkey fabric, inhaling the perfume of aromatic tobacco, or the fumes of opium, and leisurely enjoying the delicious fragrance of the carefully prepared cup in a manner to which the Western nations have not yet accustomed themselves, the artisan, the lounger, the man of literary culture, and now and then even the howadji, passed their leisure hours. At times the monotony of the silent, dreamy siesta was broken by the tales of story-tellers, rich in amusement and interest as those with which the talkative Scheherezade

ISAAC SEARS ADDRESSING THE MOB.—[SEE PAGE 492.]

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ISAAC SEARS

★ ★ ★

Known as King Sears, the merchant Isaac Sears (1730–1786) helped found the Sons of Liberty in New York and actively incited protests against British troops. Defenders of the Crown called the group the "Sons of Licentiousness," and on January 18, 1770, Sears and Walter Quackenbush stopped soldiers from posting a handbill that insulted their organization. Other soldiers came to their comrades' aid. When a group of New Yorkers confronted the redcoats on Golden Hill (present-day John Street in lower Manhattan), an officer ordered his men, "Draw your Bayonets, and cut your Way through them!" The troops chased citizens armed with sticks, clubs, and sleigh rungs, and the scuffle, six weeks before the Boston Massacre, resulted in numerous bayonet stabbings. After Parliament enacted the Tea Act in 1773, Sears (left, with arm extended) and Alexander McDougall told their allies to agitate against it. When the *Nancy* docked in New York in April 1774, they, like their compatriots in Boston four months earlier, boarded the brigantine and dumped tea into the East River. After Lexington and Concord, Sears had British ships detained in port, seized 500 muskets and 1,200 pounds of gunpower from City Hall, and organized a militia to secure the city. He turned over command of New York to George Washington when the general arrived in June 1776. Before the British occupied New York, Sears left for Boston and soon became a privateer.

THOMAS PAINE

★ ★ ★

"Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph," wrote English-born Thomas Paine, whose words helped to shape the American Revolution. Paine (1737–1809) detested the British monarchy and any form of government that relied on birthright. The writer immigrated to the colonies in 1774 and shortly thereafter penned his first pamphlet, *Common Sense*, which outlined ideas advocating for American independence in simple terms that appealed to the masses. Among these notions were equal rights for all citizens, a republican government, and an American revolution that would shape the entire world. The pamphlet sold some 150,000 copies in one year. "I know not whether any man in the world has had more influence on its inhabitants or affairs for the last thirty years than Tom Paine," John Adams wrote in 1805. Paine continued to wield his words throughout the Revolution, using his papers to boost American troops' morale, and he helped shape Pennsylvania's state constitution. After the new nation was established, Paine returned to Europe during the French Revolution. With his *Rights of Man*, he supported the uprising and helped usher in a new age in which natural and universal rights for all—at least for all white men—were at the forefront of the conversation.

SAMUEL ADAMS

★ ★ ★

After graduating from Harvard College in 1740, Samuel Adams (1722–1803) struggled to find a steady career path. The future firebrand patriot failed first as a brewer and then again as a newspaper publisher before settling on politics. The Boston-born Adams rose to prominence in local politics and then the Massachusetts assembly, where he was the first to propose a Continental Congress. When the British imposed the Stamp Act of 1765, Adams helped organize one of the most significant protests in American history: the 1773 Boston Tea Party, in which members of the Sons of Liberty, Adams among them, dumped 342 chests of tea from British merchant ships into Boston Harbor. This audacious act of defiance drove the colonists and the Crown closer to war. Adams served as a delegate in the Continental Congress through 1781. While representing his state, he signed the Declaration of Independence alongside his second cousin, future president John Adams. After retiring as a delegate in 1781, Adams became governor of Massachusetts in 1793. He was reelected every year for the next three years after that, until he retired because of his declining health.

THOMAS HUTCHINSON

★ ★ ★

The great-great-grandson of the religious dissenter Anne Hutchinson, Thomas Hutchinson (1711–1780) came from a wealthy merchant family. After graduating from Harvard College at age 16, he rose through the Bay Colony's political system, from selectman to royal governor. He supported Benjamin Franklin's idea of the Albany Congress and its call for colonial union; while it was never approved, it created a template the colonists used in the Stamp Act Congress and the First Continental Congress in 1764. A determined royalist, Hutchinson abhorred the independence-minded rabble and such leaders as Samuel Adams, calling John's second cousin the "Grand Incendiary." He opposed the enactment of the Stamp Act, yet when it went into effect in 1765, many Bostonians blamed him for it. The Sons of Liberty gathered on August 26, 1765, and sacked his home, ripping down inside walls. When five Bostonians were killed in the 1770 Boston Massacre, he had the soldiers arrested and tried and had troops withdraw from Boston to Castle William. Following the passage of the Tea Act, he insisted that ships with tea dock in port so that the tax was paid. Patriots dressed as members of the Mohawk nation, then boarded the ships and dumped the crates into Boston Harbor. Highly unpopular, Hutchinson was the last civilian royal governor, replaced by General Thomas Gage. Hutchinson then headed back to London and became an adviser to George III. Oxford University awarded him an honorary degree on July 4, 1776. That same year, he anonymously published a rebuttal of the Declaration of Independence, *Strictures Upon the Declaration of the Congress at Philadelphia*.

The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere

OVER THE COURSE OF ONE LATE NIGHT AND EARLY MORNING, THE FATE OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION WAS FOREVER CHANGED.

BY KOSTYA KENNEDY

AT A LITTLE AFTER 10 P.M. ON THE night of April 18, 1775, the patriots' best express rider, Paul Revere, set out from Boston by rowboat, then horseback, to warn the countryside that Royal soldiers were marching toward the towns of Lexington and Concord. By dawn on April 19, those soldiers, the Regulars, had reached Lexington, where they met resistance from provincial forces. The battles of the American Revolution had begun.

The following is excerpted from *The Ride: Paul Revere and the Night That Saved America*, written by Kostya Kennedy.

★ ★ ★

He saddled the horse in Charlestown, and the new knowledge that British officers riding good horses covered the roads ahead, and that these officers might corner him or fire at him, did not diminish Revere's resolve. As a rider and as a message bearer

in a time of extreme duress, he was in a singular class. "Steady, vigorous, sensible, and persevering," Thomas Young said of Revere. Soon, other riders, alerted by Revere, would be spread out on routes that ran like so many veins through the body of land and people. It was Revere's natural reward to go the most direct and dangerous road to Lexington—an artery, as it were, to the heart of it all—alone.

At Medford Square, Revere came upon a mounted Patriot, Martin Herrick, and Revere told Herrick of the Regulars advancing. Herrick took the news back to where he lived, riding northward away from the road and the side roads where the British patrol might have been, to the vaster farmland of Lynnfield and to the town of Reading, stopping at the tavern to spread the news. He brought word as well to the young captain of the Reading minutemen, a doctor named John Brooks. So that now, as the night deepened, the men in those more northern towns, Lynn and Lynnfield and Reading, were assembling and soon setting off toward Lexington on horseback, their fowling pieces locked and belted to their sides, fixing to meet the Regulars where they were.

Revere rode on along High Street, passing the old school and then, a quarter mile beyond, passing the wide, newly built Medford Meeting House. High Street began to slope upward, and the terrain became stonier around the sides of the road as Revere and his horse, Brown Beauty, ascended Rock Hill. The Mystic River lay below them, to their left.

The road descended off the rise and came into flatland, fenced and tended, and Revere followed the road as it neared and then veered farther away from the Mystic River, the earth wet and sometimes sodden beneath Brown Beauty's hooves. Along the way, small pools of water pocked the road, and mud splattered up from Brown Beauty's forelegs against her sides and against Revere's boots and buckskin pants.

Revere again crossed the Mystic River by bridge. High Street became Medford Street, and Revere rode into the town of Menotomy, past where the Meeting House stood and the Russell Store, and beyond that Cutler's Tavern and the wooden houses set just back into the fields. Here the road was known to those who lived alongside it as the Concord Road.

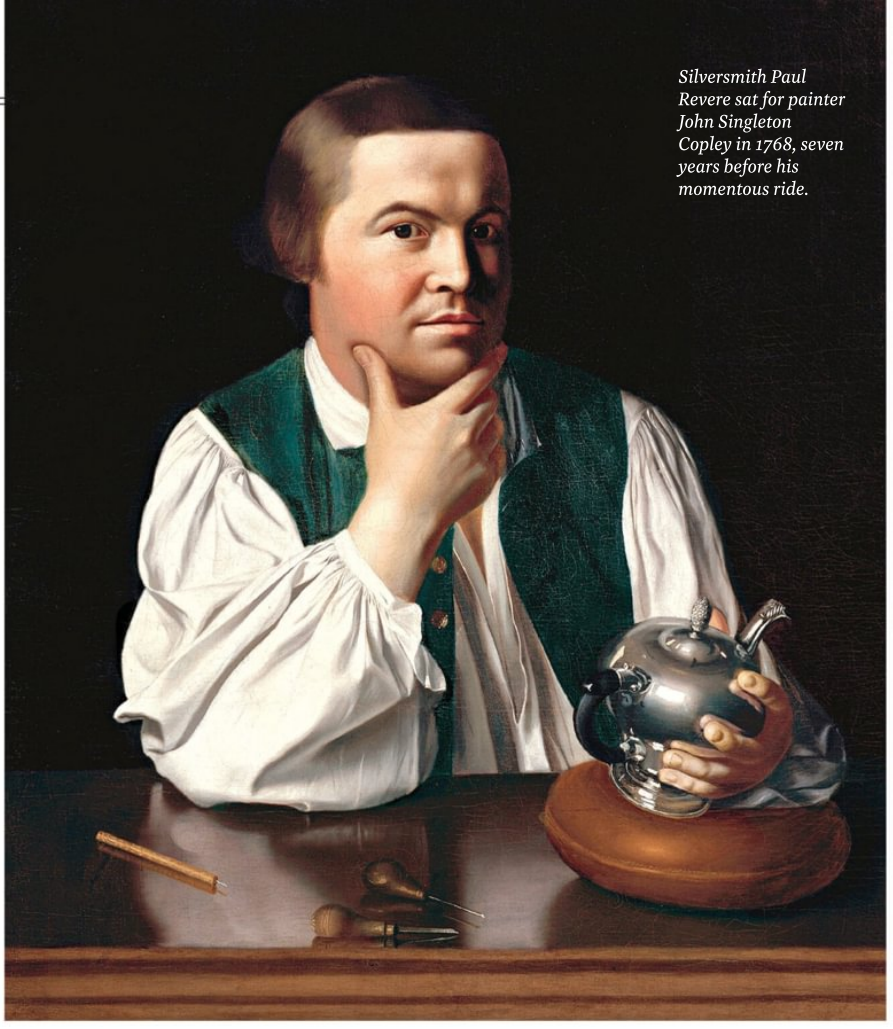
Revere was now more than three miles, closer to four, from where he had left the rider Martin Herrick in Medford. All through those miles, Revere spread word of the Regulars' advance. He passed the homes of Gibson and Swan and Caldwell and Smith and Johnson and Cutter and Hill—such names and many others that he would never reveal, would keep always protected. In remembrance of the night, Revere would say simply, "I alarmed almost every house til I got to Lexington."

There may have been 800 people living in Medford then, and maybe as many in Menotomy. Delivering the alarm did not in each case take much time, didn't much slow Revere on his intended path. He spoke directly and firmly, and his words came as tinder to a wanting flame. The Patriots he met were ready to act. "We are determined in a firm, virtuous, manly and joint way," the leaders of Chelmsford had resolved in the months before Revere's ride, "to secure and defend our liberties, those liberties purchased for us by our ancestors, at the expense of so much blood and treasure. Before they are wrenched from us we will struggle hard, very hard for them, considering ourselves as the guardians of unborn millions…. In freedom we're born and in freedom we'll die."

With Revere their progenitor, mounted messengers would over the next hours course across Middlesex County and into Essex County and Norfolk County, into the counties of Bristol and Worcester. All that night and into the day, they would ride to rally the locals throughout Massachusetts Bay and soon after would ride further still, heading south and north into the neighboring colonies so that everyone might know that the time had arrived.

They fanned out hot that night and early morning. Some messengers had been alerted by Revere, and others had been alerted by someone who had in their turn been alerted by Revere. Some messengers had heard about the lanterns shown in the Old North Church. They rode short essays and longer journeys. They took the regular roads, and they galloped through open fields, and they crossed river bridges, and they found wooded paths. They stopped once or twice or several times to give the news.

Messengers arrived at houses and farms in the moonlit early morning hours and in the predawn and as the day began to break. Sometimes one mounted messenger gave way to another who continued on, and sometimes two horsemen rode in tandem. Some messengers were experienced riders—post riders or express riders or militia men—but many simply took the assignment impromptu, chosen by random force. Together these riders formed the face and voice of the start of the American Revolution. Organized in a fashion, but loosely so, an outgrowth, in both spirit

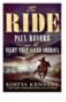


Silversmith Paul Revere sat for painter John Singleton Copley in 1768, seven years before his momentous ride.

and practical measure, of the network of express riders devised by Samuel Adams and elevated by Paul Revere. In Worcester, which lay more than 40 miles from the Charlestown line, a parched and dusty rider arrived at the square in front of the church, where his horse collapsed in exhaustion.

Riders reached town after town that night, but they did not reach everywhere. Not every farm and dwelling across those sprawling counties got the news in its early stage, not everyone would know in time. News traveled fast, but not in every case fast enough. The course of the alarm, every rider knew, could die in the emptiness of open land.

And even where the messages were received, would enough of the minutemen and the militia indeed respond quickly enough? And then would they respond again when the moment came to fight? To feel the force and menace of a hostile enemy? So many of the Patriot militia were young. So many of them were untested by the heat and danger, the din and violence and fear, of the battlefield. Traveling through the countryside delivering the news and then moving on, there was no way for Revere, or any other rider, to know how successful the errand would or would not be. □



FROM *THE RIDE: PAUL REVERE AND THE NIGHT THAT SAVED AMERICA* BY KOSTYA KENNEDY, PUBLISHED BY ST. MARTIN'S PRESS. COPYRIGHT © 2025 BY KOSTYA KENNEDY.

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CHAPTER TWO

1775 – 1777

Declaring Freedom

After a shot was heard ’round the world, delegates gathered in Philadelphia to form a new nation. The struggle for liberty proved hard.

In Philadelphia in the summer of 1776, Benjamin Franklin (left) reviewed Thomas Jefferson's draft for the Declaration of Independence as John Adams (center) looked on.

Proclaiming and Fighting for a New Nation

AMERICA DECLARED ITS INDEPENDENCE, AND A SMALL ARMY UNDER GEORGE WASHINGTON ORGANIZED AS IT TOOK ON THE MOST POWERFUL FORCE ON EARTH.

BY RICH SANDS

By the spring of 1775, war between the colonists and the British forces seemed possible. The Americans weren't yet advocating for independence; they merely wanted to be treated fairly as British citizens, especially if they were going to be faced with onerous taxes. Still, tensions were rising up and down the coast, and at the Second Virginia Convention in Richmond on March 23, delegate Patrick Henry delivered a speech that signaled that many Americans were poised to resist. "Gentlemen may cry, Peace, Peace, but there is no peace," he said. "The war is actually begun! The next gale that sweeps from the north will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms! … Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!"

Up north, General Thomas Gage, the British commander in Boston, was growing increasingly concerned about the Americans' growing organization, animosity, and military arsenal. He hoped to undermine the Americans' power by ordering a mission to raid the colonists' munitions stockpile in nearby Concord. Colonel Francis Smith and about 1,000 troops made their way west from Boston through the night and into the morning of April 19, 1775, hoping for a surprise arrival. But news of their approach had been delivered via the colonists' intelligence network, led by Paul Revere, who used lanterns as signals (two were displayed in a church steeple to convey that the troops had left Boston via the river) and who rode on horseback to route the local citizens and militiamen. By the time the redcoats reached Lexington, not long before dawn, a small group of armed colonists were waiting to meet them. The British ordered them to disperse, but they refused. A shot was fired—it has never been established from which side—and it triggered more gunfire, leaving eight colonists dead. "The shot heard 'round the world" was how writer Ralph Waldo Emerson would commemorate the moment in his 1837 poem "Concord Hymn."

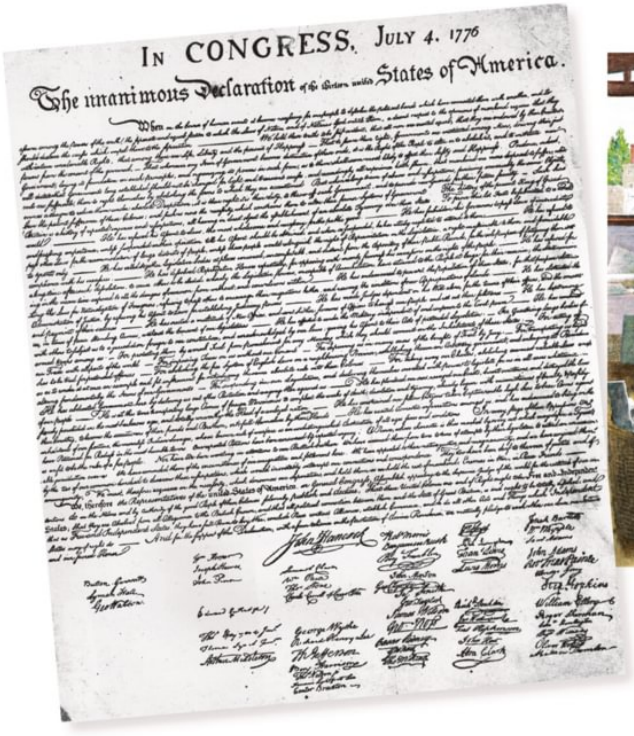
In Virginia's House of Burgesses on March 23, 1775, Patrick Henry treasonously proclaimed, "Give me liberty, or give me death."

The British army continued toward Concord, and as word spread of their approach, more minutemen and colonists gathered. When they arrived a few hours later, the British had limited success, discovering and destroying only a small cache of munitions. As more opposition joined, Colonel Smith at midday ordered his troops' retreat to Boston. It would be a bloody journey, as they were met by various militias along the 16-mile route, with the scrappy and loosely organized fighters ambushing the soldiers from the side of the road. The British, aided by reinforcements, ransacked and burned houses along the way but suffered an estimated 300 killed or injured, far worse than the American death toll of more than 90.

"In several respects, the battle was unlike any other in the Revolution," wrote historian Robert Middlekauff in his book *The Glorious Cause*. "It forecast the central problem the British would face: how to subdue not just another army but a population in rebellion."

Three weeks later, on May 10, the Second Continental Congress assembled in Philadelphia. Among the new delegates were Benjamin Franklin of Pennsylvania, John Hancock of Massachusetts, and Thomas Jefferson of Virginia. And while those gathered weren't ready to publicly call for a split from Britain, that outcome seemed more likely by the week. As Middlekauff noted, "while it shrank from committing itself clearly to either independence or reconciliation, [the Congress] was beginning to act as if it were the representative of a sovereign nation." Indeed, by June it commissioned the Continental Army, bringing troops from Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia together with those from New York and New England, with Massachusetts' John Adams successfully pushing for the selection of Virginia delegate George Washington as the commander in chief.

While Washington was preparing his forces, the fighting continued in Massachusetts. General William Howe arrived in Boston in late May. Rebels sought to head off his troops' attack of Charlestown on the peninsula just north of Boston. The Revolution's first formal fight, the June 17 Battle of Bunker Hill, was actually primarily fought at Breed's Hill, closer to the river, with the British destroying the town and forcing the colonists into retreat. But the cost was high, with more than 1,000 British


IN CONGRESS, JULY 4. 1776
The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America.

Thomas Jefferson discussing the Declaration with Benjamin Franklin. Opposite: The battle in Lexington on April 19, 1775.

casualties and roughly 450 for the Americans. "To many American fighters, the battle now called Bunker Hill felt like defeat. Ground had been given, the peninsula lost. Many were furious that militiamen had retreated. The burning of Charlestown, the first of several American towns to be obliterated during the war, stirred both sorrow and rage," Rick Atkinson noted in his book *The British Are Coming*. "But the rebel force that lacked not only sufficient ammunition and field artillery but also combat reserves, a coherent chain of command, and even water had made an impression on their adversaries."

On August 23, George III declared that the colonies were in "open and avowed rebellion." Washington had amassed his troops and artillery at Dorchester Heights, overlooking Boston. The two sides exchanged fire, but the British could not make any significant impact on the American perch. With supplies dwindling and little hope of holding off the rebels, General Howe chose to end the 11-month siege of Boston and refocus his attention on New York, evacuating the city in March 1776.

Away from the battlefield, the diplomatic movement to sever ties with Great Britain was accelerating. In Virginia, delegate George Mason drafted a "Declaration of Rights," which was adopted by the state's continental convention in June. The document opened with a statement defining the natural rights of the members of a society: "That all men are by nature equally free and independent and have certain inherent rights, of which, when they enter into a state of society, they cannot, by any compact, deprive or divest their posterity; namely, the enjoyment of life and liberty, with the means of acquiring and possessing property, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety." The wording "when they enter into a state of society" was a proviso added to set parameters for exactly who "all men" referred to. These rights would not apply to women, Indigenous Americans, or the 500,000 enslaved men, women, and children in America.

Also round this time, the Continental Congress tasked a committee—made up of Franklin, Thomas

Jefferson, Samuel Adams, Roger Sherman, and Robert R. Livingston—to draft a statement that would formalize their wish to split from Britain. They would use Virginia's declaration as a blueprint. Jefferson was the document's chief author, and as he would note in 1825, "It was intended to be an expression of the American mind and to give to that expression the proper tone and spirit called for by the occasion."

This Declaration of Independence noted that "when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security."

As in Virginia's, this Declaration only granted rights to white men, and an element missing from the final version was a condemnation in Jefferson's original draft of the slave trade, which he referred to as an "assemblage of horrors." Though Jefferson himself held hundreds of enslaved people over the course of his life, he excoriated King George III for sustaining a "cruel war against human nature itself, violating its most sacred rights of life & liberty in the persons of a distant people who never offended him, captivating & carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere or to incur miserable death in their transportation thither." This language was removed, likely as a concession to the southern colonies, where enslavement was prevalent.

Dated July 4, 1776, the Declaration of Independence was adopted by Congress in August, formally transforming the colonies into a confederation, essentially a group of cooperating separate states called the United States of America.

General Howe believed that abandoning Boston for New York would end up giving the British a significant military advantage in a town with a seemingly more sympathetic population. In preparation for their arrival, Washington sought to fortify Brooklyn at the western end of Long Island. His 9,000 troops, though, were no match for what was to come. In July, General Howe's brother, Admiral Richard Lord Howe, arrived with his fleet, and in late August, more than 30,000 troops (including thousands of mercenary Hessian soldiers from Germany) descended on Brooklyn. They quickly overwhelmed the Americans. From there, the redcoats chased Washington's troops across the East River to Manhattan, forcing Washington to evacuate his men up to Harlem Heights at the northern end of the island. The British would hold New York for another seven years.

While this loss—which gave the British the strategic advantage of controlling the Hudson River—was a significant blow to Washington, he was fortunate to maintain the Continental Army. But it would be a tumultuous period for the American troops. A series of battles north of the city had them on the run. As 1776 was coming to a close, the resilient Washington moved his forces to New Jersey, hoping to head off an expected British move toward Philadelphia.

Washington made the audacious decision to launch a surprise attack on the British garrison at Trenton. His army set out from their Pennsylvania encampment on a frigid, snowy Christmas night, making a harrowing crossing of the icy Delaware River to New Jersey by boat and marching into Trenton early the next morning, surprising the Hessians stationed there. "His 2,400 Americans, having been on their feet all night, wet, cold, their weapons soaked, went into the fight as if everything depended on them," wrote David McCullough in *1776*.

It was a decisive win for the Americans. The Hessian commander was killed and hundreds of soldiers surrendered. As Washington wrote to Hancock the next day, each of his men "seemed to vie with the other in pressing forward." Then, a week later, Washington made another bold move. After another overnight advancement, he led a successful assault on Princeton, New Jersey, surprising the British in the early hours of January 3, 1777.

Meanwhile, Franklin had traveled to Europe in the hopes of formalizing an alliance with France. "If Franklin could persuade the French to increase their support by providing proper weapons, ships, and other military aid, the American prospects would brighten immeasurably," Atkinson noted. "Rarely had a supplicant—a beggar really—set out with greater presumption, but rarely had the court of the king seen anyone like Benjamin Frankin." A savvy diplomat, he charmed King Louis XVI and his advisers, including Count Vergennes Charles Gravier, the foreign minister, knowing well of the ongoing tensions between France and Britain.

In Paris, the Americans were approached by those eager to fight for the cause. One was the 19-year-old Marquis de Lafayette, who on arriving in America joined Washington's staff. Lafayette

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Depicted here by John Trumbull, British general John Burgoyne surrendered to American general Horatio Gates at the Battle of Saratoga on October 17, 1777.

not only served the cause without pay, but he contributed the equivalent of more than $200,000 to purchase uniforms and pay officer salaries.

In the summer of 1777, General Howe set out to capture Philadelphia, the United States' capital and its most populous city. His army of redcoats defeated Washington's forces at Brandywine and Paoli, Pennsylvania, paving the way for Howe's arrival in Philadelphia on September 26. By then, the city had been largely abandoned, with the Continental Congress relocating to York, roughly 100 miles west.

At about the same time, the British were attempting to take control of the Hudson Valley in New York, near Albany. British general John Burgoyne led the charge and had initial success before being outnumbered and overwhelmed by the 10,000 troops of his American counterpart, Horatio Gates, at Saratoga. Burgoyne's surrender marked another major victory for the American cause, both militarily and symbolically, and would spur France to sign a treaty of alliance and initiate diplomatic relations with the U.S. in early 1778.

That aid would not be realized for quite some time, however. With more losses at Germantown and Fort Mifflin, and with another harsh winter setting in, Washington's forces were fatigued and depleted. The general marched his army to their encampment at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, arriving on December 19, 1777. With his men drained and their supplies dwindling, Washington would use the respite to plan his next move in what he would call "a dreary kind of place." ◻

Free to Be Happy

THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE ENSHRINED THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS AS EVERYONE'S RIGHT. BUT THE FOUNDERS HAD IN MIND SOMETHING MORE THAN BLISS.

BY JON MEACHAM

SITTING IN HIS SMALL TWO-ROOM suite in the bricklayer Jacob Graff's house at Seventh and Market streets in Philadelphia—he hated the flies from nearby stables and fields—Thomas Jefferson used a small wooden writing desk (a kind of 18th-century laptop) to draft the report of a subcommittee of the Second Continental Congress in June 1776. There were to be many edits and changes to what became known as the Declaration of Independence—far too many for the writerly and sensitive Jefferson. But the fundamental rights of man as Jefferson saw them remained consistent: the rights to life, to liberty and, crucially, to "the pursuit of happiness."

To our eyes and ears, human equality and the liberty to build a happy life are inextricably linked in the cadences of the Declaration, and thus in America's idea of itself. We are not talking about happiness in only the sense of good cheer or delight, though good cheer and delight are surely elements of happiness. Jefferson and his colleagues were contemplating something more comprehensive—more revolutionary, if you will. Garry Wills's classic 1978 book on the Declaration, *Inventing America*, puts it well: "When Jefferson spoke of pursuing happiness, he had nothing vague or private in mind. He meant public happiness which is measurable; which is, indeed, the test and justification of any government."

The idea of the pursuit of happiness was ancient, yet until Philadelphia it had never been granted such pride of place in a new scheme of human government—a pride of place that put the governed, not the governors, at the center of the enterprise. Reflecting on the sources of the thinking embodied in the Declaration, Jefferson credited "the elementary books of public right, as Aristotle, Cicero, Locke, Sidney, etc."

As with so many things, then, to understand the Declaration, we have to start with Aristotle. "Happiness, then," he wrote, "is … the end of action"—the whole point of life. Scholars have long noted that for Aristotle and the Greeks, as well as for Jefferson and the Americans, happiness was not about yellow

smiley faces, self-esteem, or even feelings. According to historians of happiness, and Aristotle, it was an ultimate good, worth seeking for its own sake. Given the Aristotelian insight that man is a social creature whose life finds meaning in his relation to other human beings, Jeffersonian eudaemonia—the Greek word for happiness—evokes virtue, good conduct, and generous citizenship.

As Arthur M. Schlesinger Sr. once wrote, this broad ancient understanding of happiness informed the thinking of patriots such as James Wilson ("the happiness of the society is the first law of government") and John Adams ("the happiness of society is the end of government"). Once the Declaration of Independence was adopted and signed in the summer of 1776, the pursuit of happiness—the pursuit of the good of the whole, because the good of the whole was crucial to the genuine well-being of the individual—became part of the fabric (at first brittle, to be sure, but steadily stronger) of a young nation.

The thinking about happiness came to American shores most directly from the work of John Locke and the Scottish-Irish philosopher Francis Hutcheson. During the Enlightenment, thinkers and politicians struggled with redefining the role of the individual in an ethos so long dominated by feudalism, autocratic religious establishments, and the divine rights of kings. A key insight of the age was that reason, not revelation, should have primacy in human affairs. That sense of reason was leading Western thinkers to focus on the idea of happiness, which in Jefferson's hands may be better understood as the pursuit of individual excellence that shapes the life of a broader community.

Like, say, the newly emerging United States of America. Pre-Jefferson, the precept was explicitly expressed in the newly adopted Virginia Declaration of Rights, a document written by George Mason and very much on Jefferson's mind in the summer of 1776. Men, wrote Mason, are "equally free and independent, and have certain inherent … rights, [among them] the enjoyment of life and liberty, with the means of acquiring and possessing property, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety." Property is often key to happiness, but Mason was thinking more broadly, drawing on the tradition of the ancients to articulate a larger scope for civic life.

From John Winthrop to Jefferson to Lincoln, Americans have been defined by our sense of our own exceptionalism—a sense of destiny that has, however, always been tempered by an appreciation of the tragic nature of life. We believe ourselves to be entitled by the free gifts of nature and of nature's God—of our Creator, in a theological frame—to pursue happiness. What Americans don't always let on is that we know, beneath the Rockwellian optimism and the Reaganesque confidence and the seemingly boundless faith in a democratically digital future, that we have been promised only a chance to pursue happiness—not to catch it. Americans would rather the world thought of us as Jimmy Stewarts, when there's a strong strain of Humphrey Bogart in our national character. We're optimists and believers, yes, but we're practical about it, even if we don't want you to know it.

AMERICANS HAVE BEEN DEFINED BY OUR OWN EXCEPTIONALISM. WE BELIEVE OURSELVES ENTITLED BY THE FREE GIFTS OF NATURE—AND OF NATURE'S GOD—TO PURSUE HAPPINESS.

Strictly personal happiness has its own paradoxes. Experience teaches us that the more aggressively we pursue it, the harder it can be to find. (Ask Jay Gatsby, or just about any second-term U.S. president.) Still, there are a lot more people trying to get into this country than out of it. If it were the other way round, we wouldn't be debating immigration the way we are.

If the 18th-century meaning of happiness connoted civic responsibility, the word has occasionally been taken to be more about private gratification than public good. It's really about both, but in some eras of U.S. history, the private pursuit has crowded out the larger one. Consider the Gilded Age, the cultural excesses of the 1960s and '70s, or the materialism so prevalent in the 1980s. Whether the issue at hand is financial ambition or personal appetite, the pursuit of happiness, properly understood, is not a license to do whatever we want whenever we want if we believe it will make us happiest right then. Happiness in the Greek and American traditions is as much about equanimity as it is about endorphins.

Much is often made of the fact that Jefferson in-

Thomas Jefferson (left) discussed the Declaration of Independence with Roger Sherman, Benjamin Franklin, Robert Livingston, and John Adams.

serted "the pursuit of happiness" in place of "property" from earlier formulations of fundamental rights. Yet property and prosperity are essential to the Jeffersonian pursuit, for economic progress has long proven a precursor of political and social liberty. As Jefferson's friend and neighbor James Madison would say, the test is one of balance and proportion. More often than not, Americans have managed to find that balance.

We must, therefore, be doing something right. The genius of the American experiment is the nation's capacity to create hope in a world suffused with fear. And while we are too often more concerned with our own temporary feelings of happiness than we are with the common good, we still believe, with Jefferson, that governments are instituted to enable us to live our lives as we wish, enjoying innate liberties and freely enjoying the right to pursue happiness, which was in many ways the acme of Enlightenment ambitions for the role of politics. For Jefferson and his contemporaries—and, thankfully, for most of their successors in positions of ultimate authority—the point of public life was to enable human creativity and ingenuity and possibility, not to constrict it.

In 1816, Jefferson wrote to John Adams about the nature of grief. Drawing on his affection for Homeric poetry, Jefferson quoted the lines from *The Iliad* in which Priam and Achilles come together one night shortly after Achilles has killed Hector, Priam's son. The two sit together for a time, musing on the unhappiness of the mortal world.

> *Two urns by Jove's high throne have ever stood,*
> *The source of evil one, and one of good;*
> *From thence the cup of mortal man he fills,*
> *Blessings to these, to those distributes ills;*
> *To most he mingles both.*

This was the tragic Jefferson, and the tragic American. On other occasions, he—and we—could refuse to accept the twilight. "Whatever they can," Jefferson said of us, "they will." He lived, as we do, somewhere between Homer and hope, seeking a happiness that will warm our days—and shape not only our own internal worlds, but the world around us. □

FAREWELL TO THE KING

Five days after the Declaration was adopted, New Yorkers pulled down a gold-plated statue of George III and melted it into bullets.

BY DANIEL S. LEVY

A GRAND, GOLD-LEAFED, 20-TON lead statue of King George III once commanded Manhattan's Bowling Green. Prior to the Revolution, New Yorkers looked upon their toga-robed monarch bestride his horse with a "deep sense of the eminent and singular benefits received from him." Much, though, had changed since it was set there in 1770. On July 9, 1776, George Washington had the Declaration of Independence read to the Continental troops stationed in the city in order to encourage "every officer, and soldier, to act with Fidelity and Courage." A crowd fortified by liberty, along with rum and ale, then swarmed down Broadway. They pulled the royal horse from its pedestal, hacked off the king's head, fired a musket shot into it, pounded away the nose, and pried off the laurel wreath. With fife and drums playing the popular tune "The Rogue's March," the crowd carried off the mangled head, which eventually disappeared. The carcass went to much better use. It was cut up and shipped to Connecticut, where patriotic women melted the lead down into ammunition, producing more than 42,000 bullets with which to drive out the fallen King's lobsterbacks.

What the British Thought of American Independence

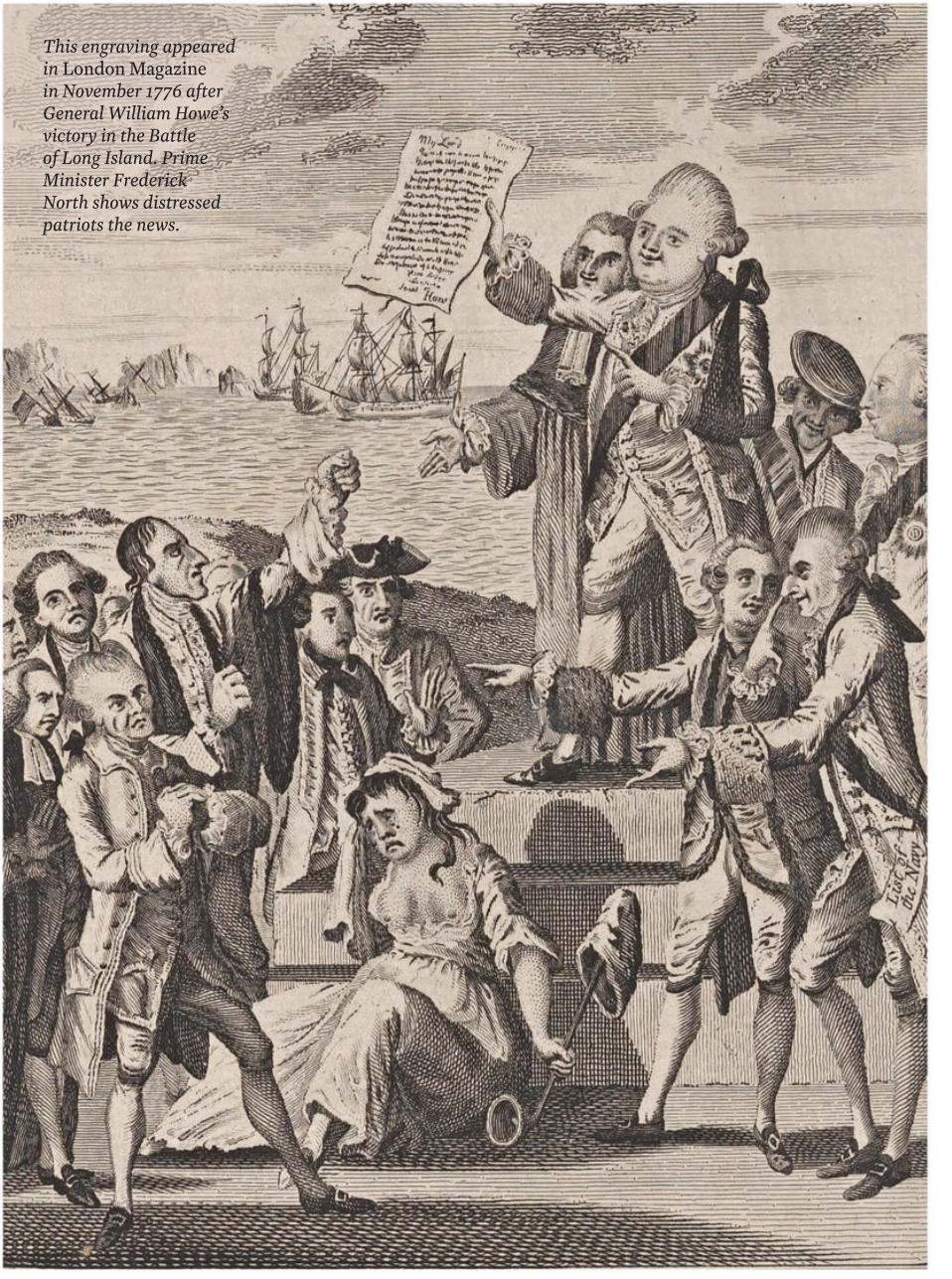
WHEN NEWS REACHED ENGLAND, THE ATMOSPHERE WAS FAR FROM CELEBRATORY.

BY CIARA NUGENT

In the United States, the Fourth of July is, for many people, a time to watch some fireworks and eat some hot dogs in celebration of American independence. But in 1776, when news reached Britain of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence, the atmosphere was anything but celebratory. A look through letters from the period, now held in the archives of the U.K.'s Nottingham University, shows that the British public was divided over the outbreak of war with what were then their colonies—over how bad it was, whose fault it was, and what to do about it.

Before the Americans officially declared independence, the British were worried about what King George III's response to the unrest there would certainly be. After all, the Declaration of Independence was not the beginning of the American Revolution; the riot-provoking Stamp Act was passed in 1765, the Boston Tea Party took place in 1773, and the famous "shot heard 'round the world" was fired in 1775.

One 1775 letter from a group of merchants and traders in the southwestern port city of Bristol sheds light on the economic concerns provoked by the burgeoning revolution. They wrote to the king to express their concern about the "unhappily distracted empires" and urged him to give the American colonists the freedoms they wanted rather than risk a precious trading relationship. "It is with an affliction not to be expressed and with the most anxious apprehensions for ourselves and our Posterity that we behold the growing distractions in America threaten, unless prevented by the timely interposition of your Majesty's Wisdom and Goodness, nothing less than a lasting and ruinous Civil War," they wrote. "We are apprehensive that if the present measures are adhered to, a total alienation of the affections of our fellow subjects in the colonies will ensue, to which affection much more than to a



This engraving appeared in London Magazine *in November 1776 after General William Howe's victory in the Battle of Long Island. Prime Minister Frederick North shows distressed patriots the news.*

dread of any power, we have been hitherto indebted for the inestimable benefits which we have derived from those establishments. We can foresee no good effects to the commerce or revenues of this kingdom at a future period from any victories which may be obtained by your majesty's army over desolated provinces and … people."

The traders warned the king that "the subsistence of a great part of your kingdom has depended very much on the Honourable and in this instance amicable behaviour of your American subjects. We have in this single city received no less than one million bushels of wheat…." While they were confident that "none can profit by the continuance of this war," the traders remained optimistic that the Americans would stay friendly if the British adopted a more conciliatory approach, despite things having been "carried to unfortunate lengths of hostility on both sides."

"[Our] fellow subjects in that part of the world are very far from having lost their affection and regard to their mother country or departed from the principles of commercial honour," they wrote.

Though their optimism might seem misplaced today, at the time it wasn't completely ridiculous. After all, this was the same year the Americans' Second Continental Congress sent the crown the Olive Branch Petition, a last-ditch attempt to convince the king to back off so that British subjects in the colonies could continue to live happily under his rule alongside their counterparts in England.

Other letters, however, give indications that some people had given up hope that the king would give in to the colonists' requests. For example, in March 1775, Chevalier Renaud Boccolari—whose own homeland of France would see a massive anti-monarchical uprising just over a decade later—wrote to peers from Modena, Italy, warning of the "awful despotism [of the English king]" and the "crowd of blind and ugly [people] with whom he has shared his unjust power for some time."

"We still find among us souls who are sensitive to freedom, souls that have not been swallowed by the insulting dominion of priests, the barbarous constriction of the inquisition and the blind, despotic monarchy," he wrote. But "every free country should be alarmed" that "in this century everything is tending towards the most illegitimate despotism."

When news finally broke that the Americans had in fact declared their independence—that they planned on being their own country, no longer part of the British empire—many in the English aristocracy were horrified. A series of letters received by the third Duke of Portland reveal how opinions differed on the subject. On July 22, 1776, his wife, Dorothy, wrote to him from Nottinghamshire that she had "received letters filled with unpleasant news, that from America I trust in God is not true, it really is too shocking."

On August 16 of that same year, Baron Rudolph Bentick also wrote from the Netherlands, bemoaning the news and sharing what people in Europe thought. "As to people's opinion here of Great Britain's disputes with America," he wrote, "the well meaning all agree no doubt that it is a most unhappy business for both countries and probably will prove a mortal blow to the liberties of the people of England." He warned that the influence of certain ambassadors might lead the Dutch to take advantage of Britain's loss and "prevent this country from acting a part most consistent and honourable

A painting by Joseph Highmore depicted 18th-century English social life at a local tavern.

to themselves, as well as beneficial to the liberties of Europe. Prudence prevents me from saying any more as this letter is to go by the post."

Some, though, blamed the British government for what was happening and willed their leaders to give up and abandon the war with the Americans. On September 7, 1776, Stephen Sayre of Harley Street, London, wrote to the Duke of Portland, urging him and others to come to a meeting to figure out how to cut Britain's losses. "And tho we think America is lost: yet we wish to preserve this country," he wrote.

And on October 18, 1776, the Right Honourable Thomas Townshend wrote to the Duke of Portland complaining that "the Government and Majority have drawn us into a war, that in our opinion is unjust in its Principle and ruinous in its consequences." As he prepared for a meeting of Parliament, of which he was a longstanding member, Townshend told the Duke the British authorities "by their violence … have driven the Americans to extremitys." "I cannot for one, on any condition, give my assent to any of their measures in the prosecution of it," he noted, worrying that many such measures would be proposed at Parliament's next session. He worried that, despite his point of view, "we shall have a difficult task to support the Americans declaring for separation" among the British political establishment. Townshend dismissed concerns about his letter being read by censors, writing, "I have no objection to any one knowing my opinion on this subject."

Unsurprisingly, others were less sympathetic to the American rebels. On December 30, 1776, one G.B. Brudenell wrote from London, to H.F.C. Pelham-Clinton, 2nd Duke of Newcastle-under-Lyne, giving news of the capture of Fort Washington by General William Howe, who drove the rebel forces from Manhattan, though at great cost. "It is very melancholy to think," Brudenell wrote, "that we must sacrifice so many brave lives, in order to put an end, to such an unnatural Rebellion." □

George Washington: First and Foremost

REVERED FOR HIS BATTLEFIELD HEROICS AND UNASSAILABLE INTEGRITY, WASHINGTON WAS THE NASCENT NATION'S INDISPENSABLE MAN.

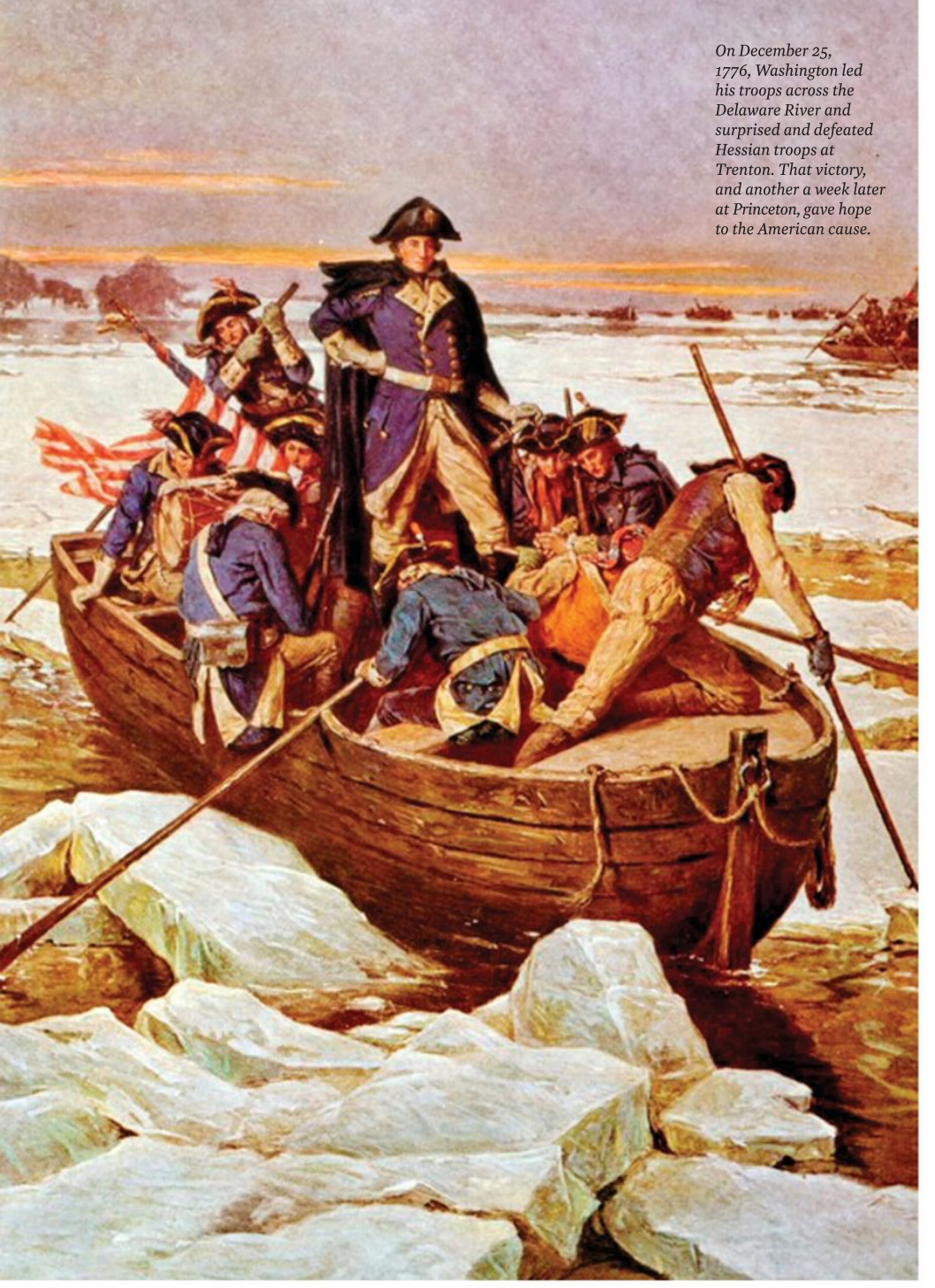
BY RICHARD LACAYO

First, let's dispense with the folklore. All historians agree: George Washington never chopped down a cherry tree and then fessed up to his father with the words "I cannot tell a lie.'' And he never threw a silver dollar across the Potomac; from Mount Vernon, that can't be done. But his life needs no fictional trimmings. The man who led the Continental Army to victory in the Revolutionary War, who presided over the debates of the Constitutional Convention and became the first president of the United States, lived one of the most eventful, colorful, and consequential lives of all time.

It began on February 11, 1732, by the old Julian calendar—February 22 by the one adopted during his lifetime in Westmoreland County, Virginia. The first child of Augustine Washington, a prosperous tobacco grower, and his wife, the former Mary Ball, young George grew up in a world of material comfort. Augustine had acquired nearly 10,000 acres in several locations and owned 50 enslaved people.

But when George was 11, his 49-year-old father died. Increasingly, Washington looked to his adult half brother Lawrence as a surrogate father. Lawrence had married a daughter of the nearby Fairfax family, genuine English nobility transplanted to the New World. When George was 16, William Fairfax, his brother's father-in-law, attached him to a team surveying family lands in western Virginia, which he would continue to do for three years. We know from Washington's flirtatious letters and gushing romantic poetry that he developed an infatuation with Sarah "Sally" Fairfax, who had married into the posh neighboring family. Whether or not their relationship went beyond flirtation has divided biographers, but he carried her seriously in his affections for the rest of his life.

Washington was devastated in 1752 when his beloved half brother died of tuberculosis at 34. Although he had no real military experience, he won Lawrence's former post as an adjutant general of Virginia, a high office in the colony's somewhat amateurish militia. In October 1753, the strapping,



On December 25, 1776, Washington led his troops across the Delaware River and surprised and defeated Hessian troops at Trenton. That victory, and another a week later at Princeton, gave hope to the American cause.

In 1784, the Marquis de Lafayette returned to the U.S. He spent 10 days with Washington at Mount Vernon, writing to his wife that he was "reveling in happiness."

6-foot-plus Washington was asked to lead a small band into the Ohio Valley (encompassing present-day Ohio, Indiana, western Pennsylvania, and West Virginia), one of several places around the world where France and England were competing for dominance. This simmering contest would soon explode into the global conflict called the Seven Years' War, which in North America would be known as the French and Indian War. Washington, still an obscure young colonial officer, would unintentionally light the match.

France planned to establish a chain of forts between Lake Erie and the Ohio River—land claimed by Britain. As a "royal emissary," Washington carried a letter warning the French to leave. In December 1753, he and his small party arrived at Fort LeBoeuf in Pennsylvania, where his hosts informed him that they intended to stay put. Washington couldn't help but notice that the French had hundreds of canoes ready for military use. After an arduous trek back to Virginia, he warned of an impending invasion. Named a lieutenant colonel, he was made second in command of a force headed west to confront the French. In one skirmish, Washington's troops overwhelmed a much smaller contingent. Among the dead was a French commander, Joseph Coulon de Jumonville, who, it turned out, was on a diplomatic mission; killing him was a grievous breach of international relations.

In retrospect, this was the first firefight of the French and Indian War. (Jumonville's avenging brother later routed Washington at Fort Necessity, forcing him to sign a humiliating surrender.)

In February 1755, Washington was tapped as an aide-de-camp to British Major General Edward Braddock, bound with some 3,000 troops to the Ohio Valley. It did not end well. That July, Braddock's men were ambushed near the Monongahela River, leaving 900 dead and wounded—including the general, who died three days later. Washington fought with extraordinary bravery, even having two horses shot out from under him. The disaster left him convinced that the agile, forest-fighting tactics of the Indians were the ones best suited to the colonies.

Returning to civilian life, Washington was elected to Virginia's House of Burgesses and began a lightning courtship of the wealthiest widow in Virginia, Martha Dandridge Custis. On January 6, 1759, they married at her magnificent home near Williamsburg.

Prophetically, it was called the White House.

For the next 16 years, Washington enjoyed pursuing the life of a Virginia planter and country squire. With Martha's fortune, he was now one of the wealthiest men in Virginia. Upon the death of Lawrence's widow in 1761, Washington inherited Mount Vernon, where he entertained lavishly. But events in the larger world would exert their irresistible pull—especially rising discontent about British policy toward the American colonies.

Debt-ridden from war, Britain passed the Stamp Act of 1765, imposing a tax on legal documents, newspapers, even playing cards. To many Americans, this plainly violated the tradition that only their own legislatures could tax the colonies, and it set off a storm of protest. Parliament repealed the Stamp Act one year later, only to pass the 1767 Townshend Acts, placing heavy duties on a range of British imports, including paint, paper, glass, and tea. Parliament later rolled back the Acts, except for the tax on tea—sparking, on December 16, 1773, the Boston Tea Party, at which colonists disguised as Indians dumped tea into Boston Harbor. The next September, after Britain had closed the port of Boston in retaliation and imposed martial law on Massachusetts, the colonies convened the First Continental Congress in Philadelphia to plot their response.

A delegate, Washington strongly supported Congress's approval of a boycott of British goods. When the Second Continental Congress convened eight months later, fateful skirmishes had already occurred between British regulars and Massachusetts volunteers at Lexington and Concord. War was effectively underway. On May 4, 1775, Washington left Mount Vernon for Philadelphia in an elegant handmade carriage. He would not see his beloved home for six years.

On June 15, Washington was unanimously selected to be commander in chief of an army drawn from all the colonies. "Though a battle-tested veteran," the historian Joseph J. Ellis wrote, "compared to the British officers he was sure to face on the battlefield, he was a rank amateur." Washington's first major move proved disastrous. He sent 1,200 men under Colonel Benedict Arnold to capture British-held Quebec. Crossing the snow-packed Maine wilderness, the troops were ravaged by hunger, disease, and exhaustion when they launched an assault on New Year's Eve 1775. It ended in total defeat, with Arnold badly wounded. In April 1776, Washington moved his army into New York, where—just as America was declaring independence—the British, under generals William Howe and Charles Cornwallis, routed his forces on Long Island and in Manhattan. Washington led the limping remnant of his army on a miserable retreat through New Jersey, crossing the Delaware River into Pennsylvania.

Howe eventually set up a winter camp outside Trenton, which Washington famously overwhelmed by recrossing the Delaware on Christmas Eve 1776. His 2,400 troops swarmed the Hessians defending the post, with minimal American casualties. A week later, Washington defeated another British force at Princeton. The two victories were of huge psychological benefit to the disheartened Americans.

Even more momentous, in October 1777, American troops commanded by General Horatio Gates at Saratoga, New York, routed a sizable British force under General John Burgoyne. This stunning victory, a turning point in the war, had one immensely important consequence: Persuaded that the colonies might actually prevail, in February 1778 the French entered the war on the American side.

By then, Washington had survived one of his worst ordeals. Throughout the winter of 1777–78, he and his men had been camped at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. A windy plateau 18 miles northwest of Philadelphia, it would become legendary for the hardships suffered there by ragged soldiers short of food, blankets, and clothing. Freezing temperatures settled in, and illness swept the camp—but remarkably, the army endured. That there was no mutiny was due in large measure to the near-religious reverence Washington commanded.

The next several years would bring crushing disappointments, notably the treachery of now Major General Arnold, one of Washington's most adroit and trusted officers. Feeling inadequately rewarded for having won important battles that had left him a near cripple, Arnold—in exchange for money and a commission in His Majesty's Army—agreed to deliver the American fort at West Point into British hands. The plot was thwarted, and Arnold joined the British, his name forever synonymous with "traitor!"

Then, in 1781, American fortunes turned around abruptly and completely. That summer, Britain's General Cornwallis had conducted campaigns in Virginia in hopes of luring Washington into a major battle. Washington didn't take the bait until he heard the French fleet was on its way from the West Indies. In October, 9,000 French soldiers marched along with 10,000 Americans and cornered the enemy at Yorktown, decimating the British ranks with cannon fire.

On October 17, 1781, Cornwallis surrendered. The Americans had won, though the Treaty of Paris ending the conflict wouldn't be signed for two years.

Weary and graying at 51, Washington went home to Mount Vernon and threw himself into making improvements to his beloved estate. But his return to private life would not be simple. He had become a kind of secular god, the most revered man in America, and public affairs kept pulling him away.

The 13 fledgling states had adopted the Articles of Confederation, a loosely binding charter that declared a nation without truly creating one. Essentially, Americans had a rump government with no executive or judiciary. In the combustible situation that followed the war, this flimsy framework was a formula for disaster. Postwar economic overexpansion precipitated a deepening depression—and civil unrest. In the autumn of 1786, thousands of debt-ridden Massachusetts farmers joined a rebellion led by former militia captain Daniel Shays. Armed with guns and pitchforks, they shut down courts to prevent the start of bankruptcy proceedings. There was a whiff of anarchy in the air.

In May 1787, representatives from all 13 states met to debate amending the woeful Articles of Confederation. Washington was named to lead Virginia's delegation and, as expected, was the unanimous choice to preside over the convention. Far from just revising the existing Articles, the delegates set out to produce an entirely new government. As convention president, Washington was expected to stay out of the debates; he knew he wanted a stronger central government, but for its details he looked to John Jay and James Madison, who sketched out a three-part structure consisting of an executive, a judiciary, and a two-chamber legislature. When smaller states heatedly opposed Madison's proposal that congressional representation be proportional to population, the convention adopted a compromise that describes the U.S. Congress to this day: States would elect delegates to the House of Representatives proportionally, while in the Senate, each state would have two. Washington was the first to sign the new Constitution, lending the risky new document his unparalleled prestige. By June 1788, it had been ratified by the necessary nine states.

Virtually everyone took for granted that Washington would become the nation's first president. Congress had decided that electors chosen in January would cast their votes a few weeks later. On February 4, 1789, Washington became the only president to win the entire electoral vote, with 69 ballots. As biographer Ron Chernow put it, his eight-day journey from Mount Vernon to the national capital in New York City resembled "the procession to a royal coronation!" At one stop, young girls in white scattered petals in his path. Washington took the oath of office on the balcony of Federal Hall in lower Manhattan. Then he created a tradition by walking into the hall and speaking to Congress in the first inaugural address, a brief call for Americans to think of themselves as a nation, not a loose fabric of "local prejudices."

Washington took the presidential oath of office on April 30, 1789. At the time, New York City was the nation's capital.

It would fall to Washington to establish the operations of the executive branch—and also precedents for its scope. "I walk on untrodden ground," he memorably said. For the most part, he was respectful of congressional power. Rarely exercising the veto, he generally declined to propose specific legislative measures, preferring to lay out his vision in broad strokes and leave the rest to Congress. He ardently hoped to remain above the intensifying fray of partisan politics. But nascent parties were beginning to form around him. Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton and his allies, who favored a strong central government, would come to be called Federalists. Small-government boosters, such as Madison and Thomas Jeffer-

son, coalesced under the name Republicans. For his part, Washington signaled that he might not stand for reelection. To Jefferson and Madison, he complained that his health was failing, his eyesight dimming, his memory growing faulty. Tired of the vituperative tone of public life, he wanted to spend what was left of his life "in ease and tranquility."

One of the few things Hamilton, Madison, and Jefferson all agreed on was that without Washington's unifying presence, partisan conflicts could tear the country apart. Convinced to unretire, Washington returned to office with another unanimous vote. John Adams, who had defeated Jay in 1789 for the post of vice president, also won a second term.

In 1794, the largest domestic upheaval since Shays's Rebellion materialized over an excise tax on whiskey. Strong opposition among grain farmers, especially in western Pennsylvania, where many kept small stills, bubbled over into the so-called Whiskey Rebellion. When revenue inspector John Neville tried to serve court orders to backwoodsmen who had not registered their stills, they set fire to his house. On August 1, 6,000 frontiersmen assembled outside Pittsburgh to denounce the tax and dare the government to come after them. Washington led some 13,000 militia forces against the rebels, the only time in history a sitting president has personally supervised a military operation. Cowed, the rebels capitulated.

But for the most part, Washington's second term would be dominated by foreign affairs. He was what we now describe as a foreign-policy realist, believing nations had not friends but interests that might sometimes coincide. Though grateful for French assistance during the war, he was also unnerved by the radicalism and bloodlust of the Jacobin revolutionaries who had executed King Louis XVI. Amid hostilities between England and France, Washington issued the Neutrality Proclamation, forbidding Americans to take actions on behalf of either belligerent. Some accused him of executive overreach because he didn't consult Congress, an early instance of a conflict that continues to this day.

Washington faced a foreign-policy crisis when Britain—retaliating for American failure to repay prewar debts owed to British merchants—refused to honor its treaty obligation to vacate forts around the Great Lakes. Without announcing the new policy, the Crown directed its navy to seize American ships carrying French goods or bound for any French port. Hundreds of unsuspecting American ships en route to the French West Indies were seized, their crews given a choice between joining His Majesty's Navy and being incarcerated on disease-ridden prison ships.

Fearing tensions were escalating toward war, Washington sent Chief Justice John Jay to London to negotiate a settlement. The Jay Treaty appeared to heavily favor the British. Although Britain agreed to vacate its Great Lakes forts and compensate American merchants for confiscated cargo, it did not promise to stop pressuring American sailors. England was granted most-favored-nation trading status for its goods entering the United States but could still impose tariffs on American exports to England. The treaty set off a fury. In Boston, a British ship was set afire in the harbor. In Philadelphia (now the capital), a crowd surrounded the presidential mansion, demanding war with England. Washington anguished over signing the treaty but finally did in August 1795, and the House very narrowly approved it.

The president was bitterly attacked as a sellout by Republicans in Congress and the press. Exhausted and demoralized, he'd had enough. Washington enlisted Hamilton to draft a farewell address, which he minutely revised. Never delivered as a speech, it was published in newspapers and as a pamphlet. Warning against factionalism and regional division at home, Washington insisted on the legitimacy of federal power and in foreign affairs warned against entanglements with overseas powers: "'Tis our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances, with any portion of the foreign world."

At long last, Washington returned permanently to Mount Vernon. His time there, however, would be brief. On a snowy December 12, 1799, Washington made a five-hour inspection tour of his farms on horseback. When he arrived home, there were guests, so he graciously remained in his damp clothes rather than delay their dinner. The next day, with snow still falling, he headed down to the banks of the Potomac to mark trees he wanted cut. That night, Washington awoke with throat pain, and by the next morning, he could scarcely breathe. On the evening of December 14, he was gone, at 67.

Three days later, Washington was given a military funeral at Mount Vernon, his remains interred in the family vault. At a more public memorial in Philadelphia on December 26, his old comrade General Henry Lee delivered what would turn out to be a famous assessment. Washington, he said, was "first in war, first in peace, first in the hearts of his countrymen."

More than two centuries later, that still sounds right. □

A MULTI-NATION FIGHT

The war drew people from near and far.

BY COURTNEY MIFSUD INTREGLIA AND DANIEL S. LEVY

JOHN HANCOCK

★ ★ ★

Some revolutionaries are known for the battles they fight, while others are known for the legislation they champion. John Hancock (1737–1793) is best known for a signature so memorable, his name became a synonym for all signatures. The nephew of a wealthy Massachusetts merchant, Hancock was an established local politician when the Crown imposed the Stamp Act and the Townshend duties, which he allegedly resisted by smuggling goods aboard his ships. A popular figure in Boston, Hancock was elected president of the Continental Congress in 1775, where he used his individual wealth to bankroll revolutionary efforts. (Congress appointed George Washington as commander of the Continental Army one month later, a role Hancock reportedly wanted for himself.) One year later, the patriot signed the Declaration of Independence that had been drafted by Thomas Jefferson. Prominent and with distinct flourish, Hancock's signature stood out—reportedly, he signed boldly so that the king would be able to read his name without glasses. Hancock stepped down from the Continental Congress in 1777 and was elected the first governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 1780. In the years after the Constitutional Convention, his health faded. Hancock died while still serving as governor in 1793.

MARTHA WASHINGTON

★ ★ ★

The original first lady set the bar for a role that transcends domestic life into the political realm. While her husband served as general of the Continental Army, Martha Washington (1731–1802) stayed busy at home. Apart from running the thriving Mount Vernon residence, she ardently advocated for women to involve themselves in the war effort. She wrote to the wives of colonial governors, urging them to donate money and resources to the army. And she didn't keep herself away from her husband's army. When the troops were suffering during the infamously bitter winter at Valley Forge, she visited the soldiers, donating food, nursing the sick and wounded, and sewing clothing to keep the freezing troops warm.

When her husband was elected as the first president of the United States, Washingon took on the role of the leader's spouse, a position with little groundwork laid out for her. But she was already an experienced hostess, having thrown numerous dinner parties at Mount Vernon, and her social acumen followed her into her new status.

Although it's unknown if Washington influenced policy in any way, by making frequent and important visitors feel welcome, she shaped the role of first lady into a public service all its own.

THAYENDANEGEA

★ ★ ★

Born near current-day Akron, Ohio, the Mohawk leader Thayendanegea ("two sticks bound together for strength"), who was also known as Joseph Brant, was educated at a forerunner of Dartmouth College. He studied English, Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. Brant (1743–1807) soon became a leader of the Haudenosaunee, the Iroquois Six Nations, a confederacy of Indigenous nations made up of the Seneca, Cayuga, Oneida, Onondaga, Mohawk, and Tuscarora. Brant fought in the French and Indian War, and when the American Revolution broke out, he sensed that the fight would be disastrous for Native tribes. To protect the Haudenosaunee's interests, he traveled to London in 1775 and met with George III. Upon his return, he was commissioned a captain of the Northern Confederated Indians and organized Natives and Loyalists. Brant's Volunteers raided communities in New York and Pennsylvania. This earned him the nickname Monster Brant. To quell his activities, George Washington ordered General John Sullivan to lead his troops against Haudenosaunee communities in northeastern Pennsylvania in order to bring about the "total destruction and devastation" of Iroquois lands. The scorched-earth policy and the Battle of Newtown led to the destruction of 40 villages. Following the war, Brant sought to create a Western Confederacy to stop American westward expansion. The British granted the Haudenosaunee a large tract of land in Canada that became Brant's Ford, modern-day Brantford, Ontario.

THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE

★ ★ ★

Marie-Joseph Paul Yves-Roch Gilbert du Motier (1757–1834), who was better known as the Marquis de Lafayette, was a captain in the French army. He became drawn to the American cause during a 1775 dinner for the Duke of Gloucester, King George III's younger brother. When the duke mocked the American rebels and George Washington, Lafayette recalled, "My heart was enlisted," and "I thought only of joining my colors to those of the revolutionaries." In 1777, at age 19 and with a letter of introduction from Silas Deane, who worked with Benjamin Franklin in seeking French support for the Revolution, Lafayette headed to America, earned a commission as a major-general, and met George Washington. The general was impressed with the young man, and when Lafayette was wounded on September 11 at the Battle of Brandywine, Washington had his own surgeon attend to him, saying, "Treat him as if he were my son." Lafayette served without pay, was at Valley Forge with Washington, contributed the equivalent of more than $200,000 to purchase swords and uniforms and pay officer salaries, stopped British raids along Virginia's James River, and fought Cornwallis's forces at Yorktown where they surrendered in 1781. Returning to France a hero, he was active during the French Revolution as a leader of the liberal aristocrats and called for the end of the slave trade. When that revolution turned violent, he was imprisoned for five years. In 1824, he returned to the U.S. for a grand tour of the land he helped create and teared up while visiting Washington's grave at Mount Vernon.

THE MUNITIONS TRADE

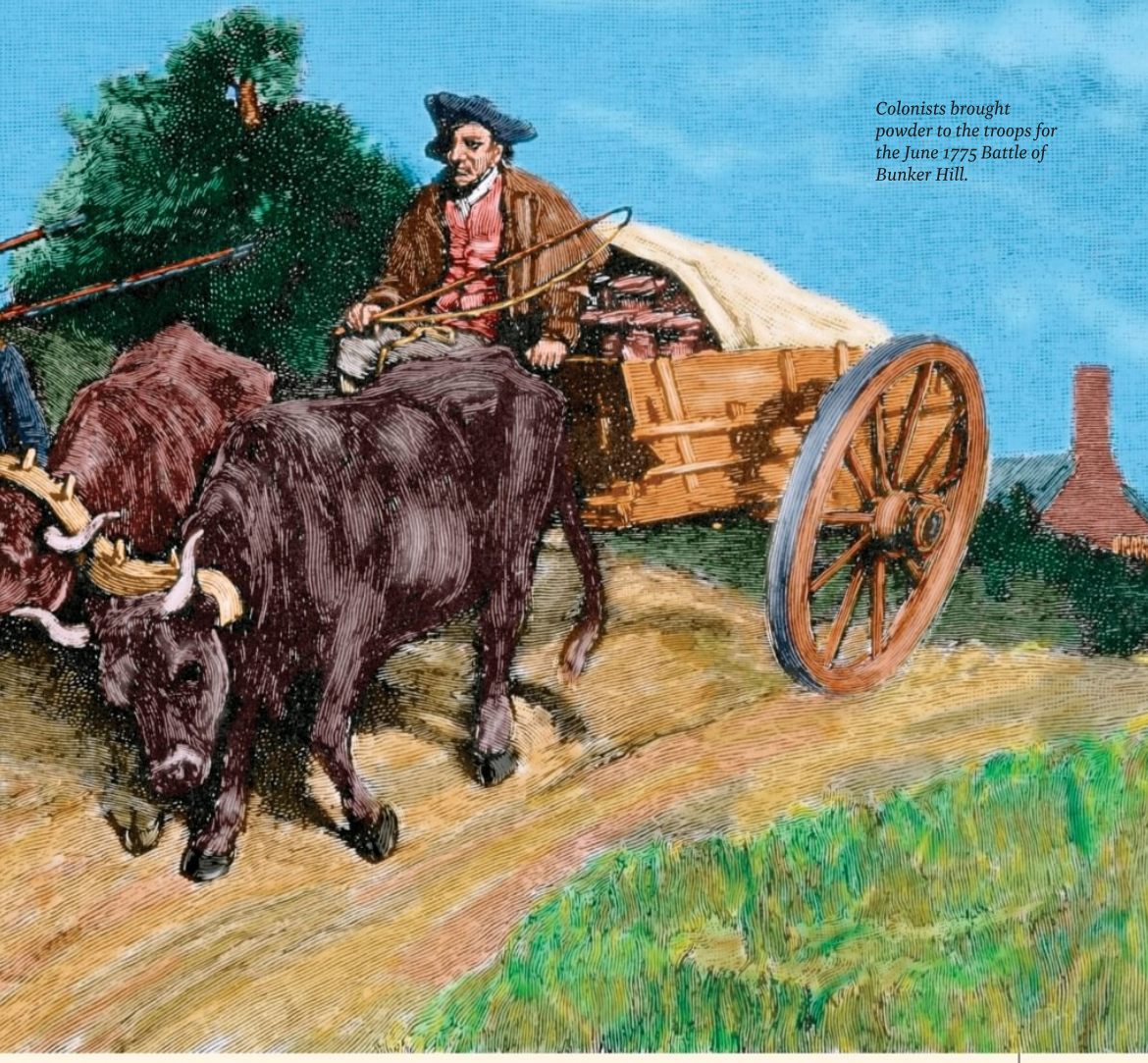
The Continental Army desperately needed weaponry in its battle with the British juggernaut.

OF ALL THE PROBLEMS THAT faced the American war effort, the most immediate at the beginning of the struggle was the desperate shortage of arms and ammunition. "Our want of powder is inconceivable," General George Washington complained on Christmas Day 1775. "A daily waste and no supply administers a gloomy prospect." The reason for the need came from Britain's Prohibitory Act, which banned the export of all arms to America. As a result, the powder in Continental muskets came mostly from France, which had closed its eyes to the activities of both European and American gunrunners. The supply, though, could not keep up with the demand, and American soldiers were severely rationed, with a daily allowance at times of only nine musket rounds per man versus the 60 rounds that each redcoat received.

This shortage gave rise to a sizable and complex business. To organize the procurement of foreign weaponry, Congress in September 1775 established the Secret Committee and authorized it to trade American produce for needed armaments. The chairman of the committee was the English-born Philadelphia merchant Robert Morris, and the committee's contract was assigned to his own trading house of Willing & Morris. The committee offered American tobacco, lumber, rice, flour, and other products in exchange for European gunpowder and other war supplies. The northern colonies usually shipped their goods directly to European ports, principally Amsterdam, Nantes, and Bilbao. The southern colonies made their exchanges through Dutch, Spanish, and French ports in the West Indies.

Willing & Morris took a commission of 2½ to 5 percent on each of the firm's transactions for the government. This was considered a fair return for the risk involved. Morris made no secret of his own financial interest, while others in Congress felt that he was the best man for the job and that his commission was a small price to pay for foreign arms. As Morris noted, "There never has been so fair an opportunity for making a large fortune since I have been conversant in the world."

Morris also arranged with other merchants—notably the Providence firm of Brown, Hopkins, Jenckes & Bowen—to seek out arms in the West Indies and Europe for 2½ percent commission. John Brown arranged to buy a cargo of gunpowder in Suriname in November 1775 and charged a price of 6 shillings a pound, which General Washington called "most exorbitant." In December 1775, Brown made a profit of £20,000 for such work. But the price rose. On a shipment from the West Indies in early 1776, the firm paid 14 shillings a pound and made the somewhat reduced profit of £1,403. All in all, about 1 million pounds of gunpowder were imported. Most of it was



Colonists brought powder to the troops for the June 1775 Battle of Bunker Hill.

unloaded in Philadelphia and stored by Congress.

The shortage of infantry weapons was not so critical, because every able-bodied man 16 years of age and older was required to have a gun for his militia duty. Some of these arms got lost or damaged, and Washington announced in February 1776 that "For every [musket] with a bayonet that have not been abused, I will give 12 dollars." Few, though, answered that request, because a new gun cost 15 to 18 Spanish dollars.

While the merchants pursued their business, the colonists supplemented the munitions trade with various ingenious stratagems.

Saltpeter, an essential ingredient of gunpowder (12 parts saltpeter to 2½ parts charcoal and 1½ parts sulfur) was sought in the refuse of stables, cellars, and even outhouses. "The mold under stables, etc., may be boiled down to extract the 'nitrous salt,'" advised one widely circulated broadside.

Pennsylvania astronomer David Rittenhouse found a ready source of lead for musket shots, taking the lead weights from Philadelphia's clocks and substituting iron ones.

Benjamin Franklin even proposed that Washington's army be equipped with bows and arrows. While that suggestion was politely rejected, the rear ranks were issued 12-foot iron shafts to use as spears.

The Army's Four Horsemen

DURING HIS FIRST YEAR OF COMMAND, GENERAL WASHINGTON HAD BEEN EVALUATING HIS CHIEF OFFICERS, AND AS THE REVOLUTION BEGAN, HE HAD FOUR NOTABLE MILITARY LEADERS.

Major General Charles Lee

Washington's chief deputy was a former British lieutenant colonel of infantry from Cheshire, England, who took up soldiering at the age of 15, learned six languages, once served as major general to the King of Poland, was an adopted son of a Mohawk tribe, and was celebrated for his writings against the British Crown. A gaunt, unkempt figure racked with gout, Lee was highly critical of other men's soldierly skills. "Our booby-in-chief' and a "stupid blunderer" was his nickname for Major General James Abercrombie, under whom he served during the French and Indian War.

For the benefit of Lee's detailed grasp of military drill, maneuvers, and planning, the more conservative Washington willingly put up with Lee's eccentricities, which included profanity, a sarcastic style in writing reports, and a pack of poodles and a Pomeranian that customarily occupied his headquarters.

Major General Israel Putnam

Putnam had become a local legend known as "Old Put," a homespun hero of the French and Indian War who in 1758 escaped scalping by the Mohawks only through a mixture of courage and guile. And then, like the Roman military leader Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus, the Connecticut farmer was celebrated for leaving his plow in mid-furrow when he heard about Lexington and Concord and headed off to join the fight against the British.

A hurricane of energy, built like a barrel of beer, Putnam quickly won the rank of general during the disorganized fighting before Washington took command. His aggressive spirit spurred American forces to the occupation of Charlestown and the Battle of Bunker Hill. Washington valued Putnam as a leader of small forces in hot combat. The semi-literate general, though, cared little about such issues as planning and supply. Putnam was second in command in New York. To help him with administration, Washington assigned him an aide from his own staff, Major Aaron Burr, a young scholar from Princeton, New Jersey, who fought with distinction in the 1775 battle for Quebec.

Brigadier General Nathanael Greene

Until 1775, the youngest brigadier in the Continental Army was a forger of ship anchors in Coventry, Rhode Island. He had little formal education but studied the writings of the Greek mathematician Euclid as well as military history beside his forge at night. Though raised a Quaker, Greene helped form a militia troop to resist British tyranny. When other members of his troop thought he should be disqualified from command because he had a bad leg, Greene offered to serve as a private. But his talent as a leader, especially in acquiring and organizing supplies, was quickly noticed, allowing him to rise from private to general within a few months. A burly man, Greene nonetheless had a gentle manner and a knack for soothing ruffled feelings. When Washington arrived in New York in April 1776, he named the young general commander of all forces on Long Island. It has been speculated that if Washington had been killed in action, Greene was the one he would have wanted to succeed him.

Brigadier General Benedict Arnold

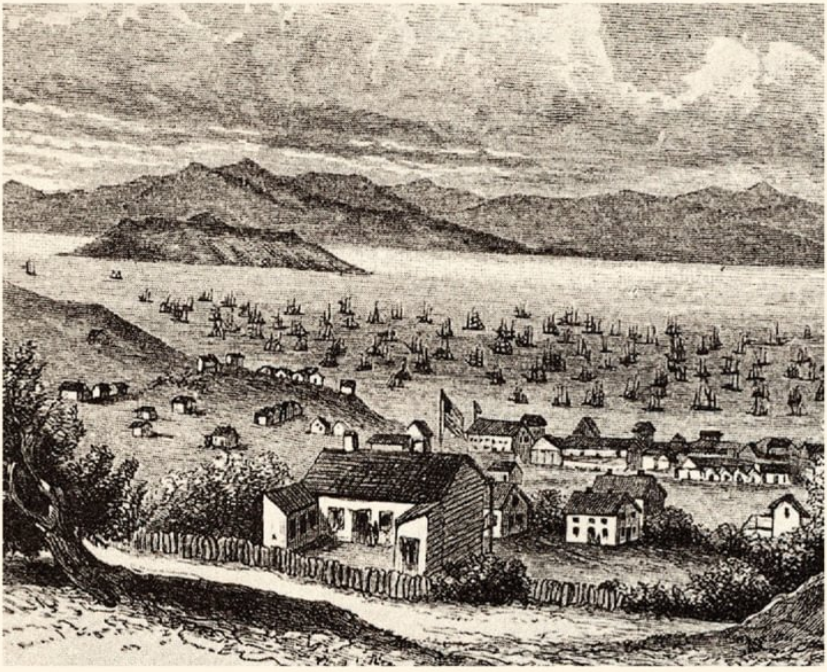
Arnold ran away from home at 14 to fight in the French and Indian War but otherwise had little military training. Even so, he was reputed to have a surer natural sense of tactics ashore and afloat than any other American commander, including Washington. He worked as a druggist and a merchant sea captain and was a member of the Sons of Liberty. When the war broke out, Arnold left New Haven and rode to Cambridge, Massaschusetts, and began raising troops to attack the British, not in Boston but at Fort Ticonderoga, overlooking Lake Champlain. He knew the fort was both weakly held and full of cannons desperately needed by the colonial troops. In May 1775, he and Ethan Allen, leader of the Green Mountain Boys, easily surprised and captured Ticonderoga. Arnold then commandeered a schooner, sailed north, and with 35 men took St. John's, just over the Canadian border. He was a chief advocate of the Canadian invasion, in which he displayed remarkable courage and daring. But his treasonous betrayal of the American cause in 1780 has ever since made his name synonymous with treason.

BEYOND THE WILDERNESS

As the fighting went on in the East,
Spanish colonists were settling on the Pacific coast.

THE BRITISH COLONISTS thought of North America mainly in terms of their Atlantic settlements and the vast wilderness to the west. Yet at the start of the American Revolution, another process of settlement was taking place on the distant coast of the Pacific. Just a week before the signing of the Declaration of Independence, a weary band of 193 Spanish colonists and their families arrived in upper California, in a spot they christened the Bay of San Francisco.

The colonists, who came from settlements in Mexico, included both soldiers and priests. They came with the intent of setting up a mission and presidio and converting the local native population to Catholicism. This was not always successful. In November 1775, a band of Native Americans attacked the mission at San Diego and killed three settlers. At the Bay of San Francisco, however, Missionary Father Francisco Palou reported that the colonists had at that point been "well received by all the heathen whom we met. They brought their gifts of mussels and wild seeds, which were reciprocated with beads…. And they were astonished at the cattle, which they had never seen before."



Reenacting the Revolution

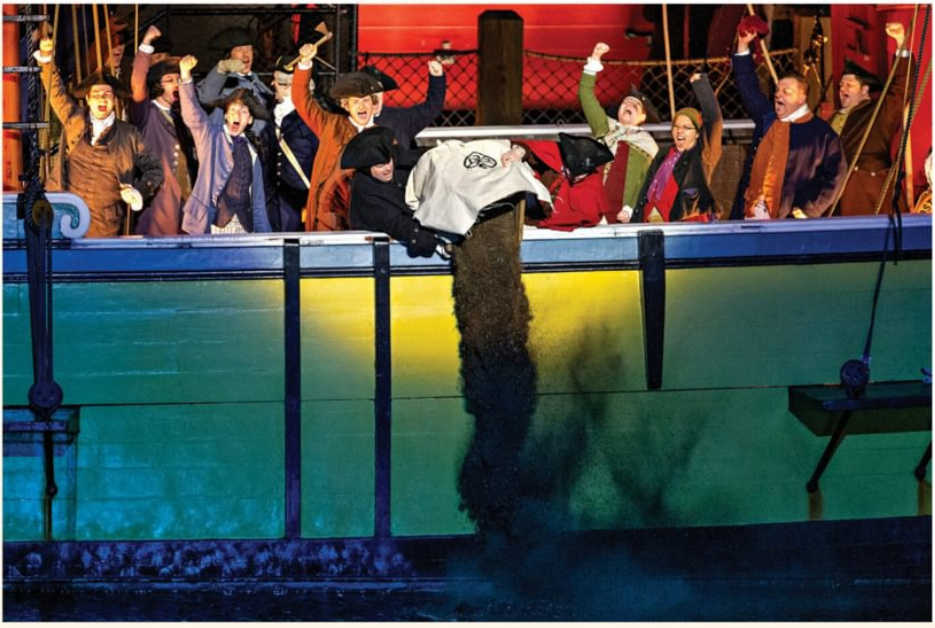
WEEKEND WARRIORS PAY TRIBUTE TO THOSE WHO FOUGHT BY REENACTING BATTLES AND EDUCATING THE PUBLIC.

BY DANIEL S. LEVY

BATTLE ROAD
Reenactors followed the 16-mile route along which the Minutemen had a running and deadly fight with the British after the Battle of Lexington and Concord on April 19, 1775.

THE BATTLE OF GERMANTOWN
Women actively supported the troops, with many wives accompanying their husbands to war. In military camps, they nursed the wounded and sick, prepared food, and mended and washed clothes. Some acted as spies, and others disguised themselves as men and fought the enemy.

THE BOSTON TEA PARTY
At the 250th anniversary of the December 16, 1773, Boston Tea Party, reenactors, some wielding tomahawks, their faces smeared with coal like the members of the Sons of Liberty, cheered as they dumped the British East India Company's tea into Boston Harbor.



THE BATTLE OF LEXINGTON
Hundreds, including this British redcoat bayoneting a Minuteman, re-created the start of the war, when "the shot was heard 'round the world."

A MOVING BATTLE
Participants meticulously dressed and equipped themselves, with reenactors at this Battle Road march coming not only from New England and other states but also England. Bitter fighting occurred along this route on April 19, 1775, taking the lives of 73 British and 49 Americans.

DELAWARE CROSSING
Participants prepared for the 2021 Christmas-night reenactment of George Washington's crossing of the Delaware River, during which 2,400 soldiers made it through the ice-choked water and surprised the Hessians in Trenton.

THE MIDNIGHT RIDE OF PAUL REVERE
Dressed as Minuteman Paul Revere, a reenactor arrived at Lexington's Hancock-Clarke House. It was there that Revere woke John Hancock and Samuel Adams. Because the men were well known for their revolutionary sentiments, they were spirited away so as not to be captured by the enemy.

THE BATTLE OF BUNKER HILL
British soldier and sailor reenactors rowed from their ships to the Charlestown Peninsula (Half-Moon Beach) as they prepared for the assault on the Americans at the Battle of Bunker Hill, the first major fight of the Revolution. The Americans lost that 1775 fight but showed they could hold their own against the better-trained Brits.

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CHAPTER THREE

1778 – 1783

The World Turned Upside Down

Washington's troops emerged disciplined and organized after the brutal winter at Valley Forge, and with France supporting the new nation, the troops fought with renewed purpose.

More than 12,000 troops wintered at Valley Forge. While they endured privations—nearly 2,000 died—General Washington had the men forage for food, and they received donations of some 600 bushels of white corn from the Oneida Nation.

A Land Takes Its Place Among Nations

WITH THE BRITISH HOLDING NEW YORK, WASHINGTON'S TROOPS WERE FATEFULLY DRAWN INTO BATTLE WITH GENERAL CORNWALLIS'S ARMY MANY MILES TO THE SOUTH.

BY CHRIS NASHAWATY

George Washington conferred with his officers at the 1781 Siege of Yorktown.

As the brutal winter of 1777 set in, General George Washington's battered and war-weary troops dug in for a long and freezing stay at Valley Forge. The punishing battles at Brandywine, Germantown, and elsewhere had left the Continental Army physically exhausted and emotionally spent. The future seemed more uncertain than ever.

More than 12,000 soldiers would shiver through the miserable final month of 1777 and into early 1778 in their winter quarters, a strategic patch of Pennsylvania high ground 18 miles northwest of Philadelphia, which was now under the control of the British army's General William Howe. Short on food, supplies, and hopeful news, the demoralized men fought back darkness, despondency, and death. Malnutrition, exposure, and disease—particularly smallpox and typhoid—spread rapidly through the camp, claiming the lives of nearly 2,000 patriots. By February, Washington would describe his army as "literally reduced to a starving condition."

Still, the situation, while desperate, was far from hopeless. Too numb to see it in the moment, Washington's army in Valley Forge was about to enter what would become the most decisive and transformative chapter in their long fight for freedom. During this period, the Continental Army evolved from a fragile and poorly supplied force into a disciplined, professional military capable of challenging

and defeating one of the most powerful empires the world had ever seen.

Valley Forge would end up being a critical test of will and endurance. And Washington's leadership during this time was crucial to the army's—and the fledgling nation's—morale. His calm and the strength of his convictions inspired loyalty among both his officers and the enlisted men. That resolve would be reinforced by the arrival of Baron Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben, a Prussian military officer and tactician who volunteered to train the American troops. Arriving with papers of introduction from Benjamin Franklin, a pair of translators, and an Italian greyhound named Azor, Von Steuben introduced the bedraggled fighters to European military drills, standardized training routines, and improved discipline and organization. Under his direction, the ragged army of late 1777 emerged in the spring of 1778 as a far more polished and confident force.

During the war, some 231,000 men served in the Continental Army, along with 145,000 from colonial militias. With low voluntary enlistment as the war dragged out, different states offered freedom to those who were enslaved if they fought. Seven thousand African Americans signed up to fight for America's as well as their own independence, with 700 serving at Valley Forge. Others supported the army as blacksmiths, hostlers, laborers, and wagoners, as well as spies. At the same time, some 20,000 African Americans fought for the British with the promise that they would be emancipated. Meanwhile, members of the Oneida and Tuscarora Native American tribes sided with the colonies, while other peoples within the Iroquois Confederacy chose to throw their lot in with the British.

While the Continental Army regrouped at Valley Forge, diplomacy abroad was reshaping another front in the war. The dazzling American victory at Saratoga in October 1777 had demonstrated that the colonists could defeat the British regulars in a major battle. That success convinced France, long hostile to the British Crown since its defeat in the French and Indian War, that the American cause was, in fact, possible, perhaps even inevitable. The enemy of their enemy was about to become their friend. It wasn't just the colonists' triumphs on the battlefield that swayed the French. The persuasive statesmanship of Benjamin Franklin can't be understated. He met with King Louis XVI amid the opulence of Versailles to gain recognition and make the case for French assistance in America's cause. Meanwhile, to the north and south, American diplomats such as John Adams sought the support of the Netherlands and Spain as allies. No one, it turned out, liked the British very much.

In February 1778, the Treaty of Alliance and the Treaty of Amity and Commerce were signed between the United States and France. France recognized American independence and committed military and naval support against Britain. The involvement of their rivals meant that Britain was about to face war not only in North America but also in the Caribbean, Canada, Europe, and elsewhere, stretching its military resources dangerously thin.

News of the alliance with France finally made its way to Valley Forge in the spring of 1778, lifting spirits and giving Washington's army a renewed sense of purpose. Sir Henry Clinton took over command of the British troops from General William Howe, and when they evacuated Philadelphia in June and retreated to New York City, Washington and his men pursued them, culminating in the Battle of Monmouth in New Jersey on June 28. The battle ended in a stalemate, but it demonstrated the Continental Army's newfound discipline and effectiveness under fire.

In the meantime, Britain shifted its sights and its strategy to the southern colonies. British officials believed that the south contained a large number of loyalists who would support the Crown in exchange for military protection. They aimed to regain control of Georgia and the Carolinas, then move northward to crush the rebellion. In late 1778, the British captured Savannah, Georgia, and by 1780, they had also taken Charleston, South Carolina, inflicting on the Americans one of the worst—and most humiliating—defeats of the war.

NEWS OF THE ALLIANCE WITH FRANCE FINALLY MADE ITS WAY TO VALLEY FORGE IN THE SPRING OF 1778, GIVING WASHINGTON'S TROOPS A RENEWED SENSE OF PURPOSE.

Washington dispatched General Nathanael Greene to command the dwindling southern army. Greene, known as "the Fighting Quaker," adopted a strategy of mobility and attrition, avoiding large-scale confrontations and instead harassing British forces through skirmishes and retreats. Like a pesky fly, he would simply wear down Lord Charles Cornwallis, who commanded British forces in the South. Working with local militia leaders Francis "the Swamp Fox" Marion and Thomas "the Fighting Gamecock" Sumter, Greene's forces weakened the British through guerrilla tactics and unrelenting pressure.

The southern campaign would reach its climax—and its turning point—in 1781. In January of that year, American forces under Daniel Morgan decisively defeated a British detachment at the Battle of Cowpens, South Carolina, a masterful tactical victory that boosted American morale after the Continentals lulled the British into an ambush following a phony retreat. Nearly three-quarters of the British force of 1,150 were killed, wounded, or captured. Later

The British refused to pose with the American delegation at the signing of the Treaty of Paris, so Benjamin West didn't complete his painting.

that year, at Guilford Courthouse in North Carolina, Greene's hard-charging army fought a bloody engagement against Cornwallis. Although it was technically a British victory, the heavy casualties suffered by the British forced Cornwallis to retreat east toward the coast for resupply.

As Washington maintained pressure in the north, keeping his sights on opportunities to strike at the beating heart of the British colonial Crown in New York, the British public and Parliament back in London were growing restless. How much longer would this expensive and seemingly endless conflict last? One American officer losing patience with the cause was Benedict Arnold. The hero at the Battle of Saratoga had begun to feel underappreciated by Washington. Young and ambitious, Arnold believed that he was not being given the credit he was due for his military exploits. In an act that would forever make his name synonymous with treason, Arnold offered his services to the British. For the next year and a half, the American hero would surreptitiously pass intelligence to the Crown. In the summer of 1780, Arnold struck a secret deal with the British to turn over his command at West Point, a crucial fort on the Hudson River, in exchange for the hefty sum of £20,000, as well as a general's commission in the British Army and a lifetime pension. Washington was devastated.

In the meantime, the arrival of a French expeditionary force under the nobleman and career military officer Comte de Rochambeau in July 1780 brought new possibilities for cooperation. The endgame was now coming into view. Cornwallis, looking to secure a defensible port for the British in Virginia, fortified Yorktown on the Chesapeake Bay. Washington and Rochambeau jumped on the opportunity this gambit presented, marching the combined army south from New York, while a French fleet under Admiral François de Grasse sailed from the

Caribbean to block the Chesapeake Bay. In a stunning display of military coordination, the French Navy defeated the British fleet at the Battle of the Chesapeake, cutting off Cornwallis's supply lines and his escape.

In late September 1781, the combined American and French forces laid siege to Yorktown. To gather intelligence, the Marquis de Lafayette recruited James Armistead to spy on the British. The African American Armistead made believe he was a runaway slave and infiltrated the enemy's camp. There he earned Cornwallis's trust, looked through his papers, gathered intelligence on troop morale and size, and brought the intelligence back to Lafayette.

As the siege developed, the Americans constructed trenches, advanced artillery positions, and bombarded the British defenses. On October 14, Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Hamilton led troops that included African American soldiers in the integrated First Rhode Island and captured British Redoubt 10. Cornwallis's situation was growing increasingly hopeless. The vise was tightening. Facing overwhelming odds, the British general was left with no choice other than to surrender his 8,000 troops on October 19. The victory would effectively end the American Revolutionary War. When he heard the news from Yorktown, British prime minister Lord North exclaimed, "Oh God, it's all over." The path to peace was finally in sight.

And yet, even after Cornwallis's surrender at Yorktown, the war was still not officially ended. British forces still occupied New York City, Charleston, and Savannah, but the die was cast. Lord North's majority in Parliament collapsed. The more peace-minded Lord Rockingham replaced him, with a guarantee from King George III to recognize American independence. Negotiations for peace were difficult, bitter, and drawn out, lasting nearly two years. The American peace delegation—John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, John Jay, and Henry Laurens—met with British representatives in Paris for the most delicate of missions. While officially allied with France, the American negotiators had to balance the interests of Louis XVI with their own desire for independence and territorial rights. France, whose primary goal was weakening its imperial rival, hoped for a longer conflict that would solidify its advantages in Europe and the Caribbean. The Americans, for their part, sought to secure a swift and favorable peace.

In the early stages of the talks, the British recognized the inevitability of American independence and sought to restore commercial relations. Negotiations centered on boundaries, fishing rights, debts, and the treatment of the colonists who had remained loyal to the Crown. The American delegates would skillfully maneuver between competing interests, negotiating directly with the British while keeping France in the loop to maintain the alliance.

Finally, on September 3, 1783, the Treaty of Paris officially ended the Revolutionary War. Its terms were remarkably favorable to the former colonies, including recognition of independence as a free, sovereign nation; new territorial boundaries that greatly expanded America, from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mississippi River and from Canada to Florida; fishing rights off the coast of Newfoundland and in the Gulf of Saint Lawrence; agreements to restore confiscated loyalist property and to honor debts owed to British creditors; and the total withdrawal of all British troops from American soil "with all convenient speed."

As the British troops were leaving New York on November 25, Washington returned. Riding into Manhattan with 800 of his troops, he was greeted by adoring citizens. Before they departed, though, the British left a parting gift. They greased the fort's flagpole, making it difficult for the Americans to pull the Union Jack. After numerous tries, sailor John Jacob van Arsdale hammered nails into the pole to make footholds. He then made his way to the top, yanked down the British flag, and unfurled the Stars and Stripes before the British had sailed out of sight. As the crowd cheered, 13 cannon blasts were fired. That evening, Washington gathered with his officers at the nearby Fraunces Tavern to bid farewell, saying, "With a heart full of love and gratitude I now take leave of you. I most devoutly wish that your latter days may be as prosperous and happy as your former ones have been glorious and honorable."

The American victory had profound implications across the globe. France's intervention shifted the balance of power in Europe, while Britain reevaluated its colonial strategy, turning its attention to India and other territories. But besides redrawing the map, the success of the American Revolution would have a lasting impact as an idea, inspiring other independence movements around the world, including in Latin America and France itself. A decade after the American colonists had first taken up arms against their king, the responsibility of governing a new nation and a new democracy was about to begin. □

DIARY OF A SURGEON

At Valley Forge, Albigence Waldo tended to the sick and dying.

SOON AFTER WAR BROKE out in 1775, Albigence Waldo (1750–1794) left his medical practice in Pomfret, Connecticut, and was commissioned a surgeon's mate. He was soon made a chief surgeon, and in September 1777, after the defeat at Brandywine Creek, George Washington ordered him to join the Continental Army. Waldo kept an invaluable diary of army life, which during the winter of 1777–78 recorded the privations the army suffered after arriving at Valley Forge on December 19.

DECEMBER 21, 1777
Preparations made for hutts. Provisions Scarce . . . my Skin & eyes are almost spoil'd with continual smoke. A general cry thro' the Camp this Evening among the Soldiers, "No Meat! No Meat!"

DECEMBER 22
I am ashamed to say it, but I am tempted to steal Fowls if I could find them, or even a whole Hog, for I feel as if I could eat one. But the Impoverish'd Country about us, affords but little matter to employ a Thief, or keep a Clever Fellow in good humour.

DECEMBER 28
Building our Hutts.

DECEMBER 30
Eleven deserters came in to-day—some Hessians and some English—one of the Hessians took an Ax in his hand & cut away the Ice of the Schuylkill which was 1 inches thick & 40 Rod wide and waded through to our Camp—he was an hour in the Water. They had a promise when they engag'd that the war would be ended in one year—they were now tired of the Service.

DECEMBER 31
We got some Spirits and finish'd the Year with a good Drink & thankfull hearts in our new Hutt, which stands on an Eminence that overlooks the Brigade, & in sight of the Front Line.

JANUARY 4, 1778
I was called to relieve a Soldier tho't to be dying—he expir'd before I reach'd the Hutt. He was an Indian—an excellent Soldier—and an obedient good natur'd fellow. He engaged for money doubtless as others do;—but he has serv'd his country faithfully.

The Nimble Envoy

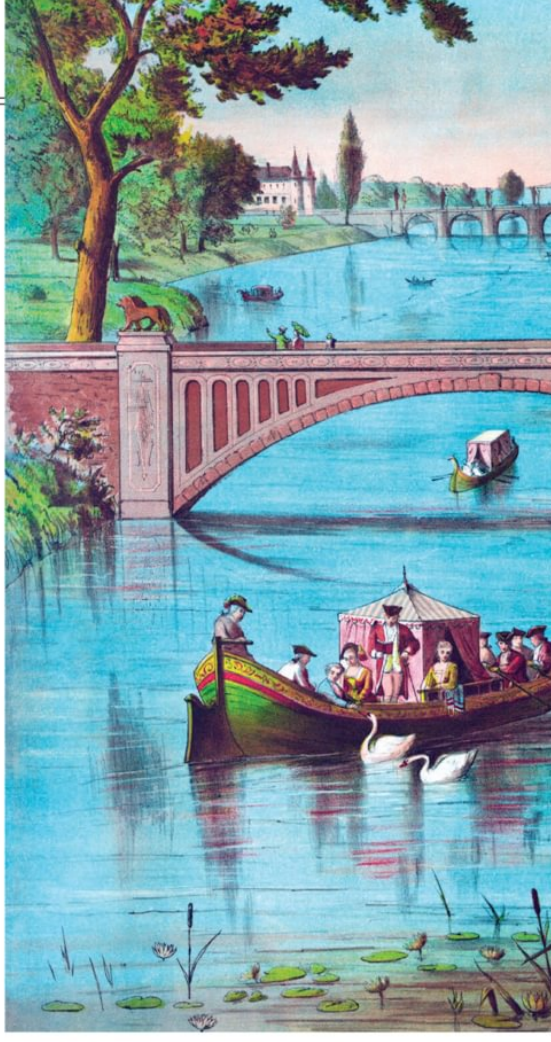
AS THE ELDER STATESMAN OF THE REVOLUTIONARIES, BENJAMIN FRANKLIN USED HIS DECADES OF DIPLOMATIC EXPERIENCE—AND HIS ENDLESS CHARM—TO WIN THE SUPPORT OF THE FRENCH.

BY DANIEL S. LEVY

In the struggle against the British, the newly formed United States needed a strong and wealthy ally to assist with money and military aid, so Congress tasked Benjamin Franklin, along with Connecticut's Silas Deane and Virginia's Arthur Lee, with seeking a formal alliance with France. Well respected in Europe, Franklin was the obvious choice. He had been to France previously and had been made a foreign associate of the French Royal Academy of Sciences. In late October 1776, Franklin, along with grandsons Temple and Benny, boarded the warship *Reprisal*. Word quickly spread of Franklin's arrival in the port city of Nantes, France. As he neared Paris, crowds cheered, many fascinated by this seemingly modest man of science in the marten-fur cap. Staying in Passy, outside Paris, Franklin became the toast of the town. Visitors saw him as the perfect republican American, an exemplar of the Enlightenment, and well-wishers arrived in droves.

America was desperate for help. Thankfully, Franklin—the man French philosopher Anne-Robert-Jacques Turgot wrote "seized the lightning from the heavens, and the scepter from tyrants"—proved the perfect person to get that help. His sense of purpose, coupled with his amiability and civility, allowed him to deal effectively with the French, begging them for assistance in fighting the nation that had beaten them the previous decade in the French and Indian War. Franklin charmed the French, and they adored the man they called "Bonhomme Richard," after his *Poor Richard's Almanack* pseudonym.

Many Parisians believed that all who hailed from Philadelphia were plain-living, unpretentious Quakers. While Franklin was not a member of the Society of Friends, he brilliantly played to his hosts' preconceptions. He rejected upper-class Gallic protocols—which required aristocrats to strut in silks and sport powdered wigs—and instead turned out as the embodiment of republican simplicity and an exemplar of the Enlightenment by dressing in white and brown linen with glasses perched upon his wigless head. The portrait painter Élisabeth Vigée Le Brun marveled at how "he was dressed in grey and his



unpowdered braided hair fell upon his shoulders; if it had not been for the nobility of his face, I would have taken him for a stocky farmer." Another Parisian observer noted, "Everything about him announces the simplicity and innocence of primitive morals."

Franklin immersed himself in the capital's social and intellectual salons. He was quickly the center of attention. No less than Queen Marie Antoinette called him "l'Ambassadeur Electrique." Many French ladies delighted in meeting him, and in the less repressive France, the widower Franklin could openly flirt. Vigée Le Brun noted, "No-one was more fashionable, more sought after in Paris than Doctor Franklin; the crowd chased after him in parks and public places … and people thought themselves very lucky if they were invited to the same dinner party as this famous man." Some who came to see Franklin sought introductions so they could fight alongside General Washington. A few arrived stateside without the military qualifications that were sorely needed, but thankfully, three men Franklin suggested proved invaluable. Polish count Kazimierz Pulaski organized the American cavalry. Prussian baron Friedrich von Steuben instilled military discipline in the ragtag forces. And the 19-year-old Marquis de Lafayette became an invaluable aide to Washington.

Temple, meanwhile, acted as secretary to the commission, loyally helping his grandfather, who despite pains from kidney stones, gout, skin afflictions, and swollen joints negotiated with French statesman Charles Gravier, Comte de Vergennes. Franklin patiently used humor and charm to win over the foreign minister, who accused England of being "a greedy enemy, ambitious, unjust, and treacherous." Vergennes arranged for funding so Washington could acquire military supplies.

While Vergennes wanted to do more to assist, he needed proof of success against the British. It did not help that the Revolution was not going well for the Americans. In September 1777, Congress had to abandon Philadelphia. But then in December, news arrived in Paris that British General John Burgoyne's troops had surrendered to General Horatio Gates at Saratoga, New York. Burgoyne's loss, along with Vergennes's fear of a possible British peace offer—something the savvy Franklin knew would force France's hand—changed everything. On February 6, 1778, Franklin met with Vergennes to sign two treaties. One recognized the United States' independence and promoted trade between the two countries; the other forged a military alliance, which over the next few years would supply an estimated 44,000 troops to the fight.

The following month, three days after Britain had declared war on France, Franklin headed to Versailles. While all who visited the king's palace had to wear their silken best, the savvy showman arrived wigless in a brown suit and white shirt and stockings. The French loved it, and King Louis told Franklin to "firmly assure Congress of my friendship. I hope this will be for the good of the two nations." When Washington heard the news of the treaty, he thanked divine providence for "raising us up a powerful Friend among the Princes of the Earth to establish our lib-

In France, Franklin worked tirelessly to woo the French to support the American struggle for independence.

erty and Independence upon lasting foundations."

At Vergennes's insistence, Congress made Franklin the sole minister plenipotentiary to France. John Adams, who arrived in Paris in April 1778 to replace Deane, was not happy about the setup, wrongly believing that Franklin's manner with the French was ineffective. Adams complained about how the Parisians were besotted by him: "Franklin's fame … was familiar to government and people, to kings, courtiers, nobility, clergy and philosophers, as well as plebeians, to such a degree, that there was scarcely a peasant or a citizen, a valet de chambre, coachman or footman, a lady's chamber maid, or a scullion in a kitchen, who was not familiar with his name, and who did not consider him as a friend to human kind. When they spoke of him, they seemed to think he was to restore the golden age."

Adams could not grasp the subtle diplomacy that Franklin practiced, nor the need to be polite and gentile, to sit through what Adams derided as "these incessant dinners and dissipations." But Franklin's efforts were proving their worth. A squadron of a dozen French warships and four frigates with 4,000

soldiers, commanded by Charles-Hector, Comte d'Estaing, sailed for America in April 1778. Because of the new alliance, the British abandoned Philadelphia in June and fortified New York.

As the war dragged on, a joint American and French force failed to retake Newport, Rhode Island, in 1778; the British captured Savannah that year and Charleston in 1780. Then General Benedict Arnold betrayed his American troops and nation and attempted to surrender West Point to the British. Discouraged, Franklin worked to speed up aid, and Vergennes approved a gift to the U.S. in early 1781. The British, under General Charles Cornwallis, marched that fall to Virginia, where his 8,300 men fortified Yorktown. Washington then headed south. The Americans massed in Williamsburg, to the west of Yorktown, and at the end of September, Washington's 8,900 men and 7,800 French troops headed toward Cornwallis's forces. As the French fleet under Admiral François Joseph Paul, Comte de Grasse, blocked British ships from resupplying their troops, Washington and Cornwallis's armies battled for three weeks. Low on food and with no chance of receiving reinforcements from Clinton, Cornwallis surrendered on October 19, 1781.

Word of the British defeat spread, and when a courier arrived a month later with news that the Americans had won, an elated Franklin hoped to step down from his post. Now 75 years old, he found his work hard. But with 26,000 British troops still

Parisians celebrated the September 3, 1783 signing of the Treaty of Paris, which officially ended the American Revolution.

in America, Congress needed Franklin to stay and start negotiations with England. He was joined by Adams and New York lawyer John Jay. At the end of 1782, a preliminary peace treaty was sent to London and Philadelphia. France was excluded from the agreement, and Franklin had the task of smoothing things over with Vergennes. In his never-failing diplomatic manner, he actually succeeded in getting more money from the French.

The Treaty of Paris was signed on September 3, 1783, at the Hôtel de York in the capital. Britain officially recognized the United States, which got a third of the North American continent: from the Mississippi River to the Atlantic and from the Canadian border to Florida, an area larger than Spain, England, and France combined. Franklin thought of staying in France, where he lived "among a People that love and respect me, a most amiable Nation to live with, and perhaps I may conclude to die among them." While in town, Franklin had also fallen for the widow Anne-Catherine Helvétius, who hosted a renowned salon where he played his glass harmonica. Franklin proposed marriage, but Helvétius said no.

In May 1785, Thomas Jefferson succeeded Franklin as the ambassador to France. Years later, in a eulogy for Franklin, he noted that taking over for him "was an excellent school of humility." When asked by the French if he was the replacement for Franklin, Jefferson simply responded, "No one can replace him, Sir; I am only his successor." □

THE FACES OF BATTLE

Some fought for and others fought against the Revolution.

BY COURTNEY MIFSUD INTREGLIA AND DANIEL S. LEVY

ESTHER DE BERDT REED

★ ★ ★

In May 1780, the American troops were in dire need of assistance. Washington appealed to Congress, reporting that his men desperately needed food, clothing, and pay. When the government proved slow in allocating resources, the women of Philadelphia, led by an English-American governor's wife, came to the general's aid.

The London-born Esther de Berdt (1746–1780) had immigrated as the young bride of Joseph Reed. Initially resisting politically charged debates, she quickly became a patriot. She wrote to her brother in London, outlining the impending rift between her new home and her birth country: "the people of New England ... are prepared for the worst event, and they have such ideas of their injured liberty, and so much enthusiasm in the cause, that I do not think that any power on earth could take it from them but with their lives." Reed helped raise more than $300,000 in paper money for Washington and his men. Sadly, she would never know the full impact of her efforts: She died in September 1780 at age 33.

WILLIAM FRANKLIN

★ ★ ★

Benjamin Franklin adored his son William (1730–1813). William was with his father when he headed into a field during a storm, lofted a kite, and proved that the atmosphere was electrified and lightning was an electrical force. During King George's War (1744–1748), William served as an officer, helped his father gather supplies for British troops during the French and Indian War (1754–1763), and went with Franklin to London in 1757 to advocate for the colonies. In 1762, Franklin helped William secure the royal governorship of New Jersey. Yet as the colonies started agitating against the Crown and Franklin became a revolutionary, William stayed a fervent imperialist. In 1776, William was placed under house arrest. Soon after, it was discovered that he had been sending information on the Continental Congress to the British, and the state's provincial congress declared him "an enemy of the liberties of this country" and imprisoned him. Released as part of a 1778 prisoner exchange, William established a network of spies called the Board of Associated Loyalists, which organized guerilla attacks on patriot communities and burned homes, killing residents in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. When loyalists left the U.S. following the 1781 defeat at Yorktown, William went to London. He hoped to reestablish his relationship with his father, but when Franklin stopped in England on the way back from Paris in 1785, he greeted his son coldly and insisted that William turn over his American deeds to William's patriotic son, Temple. The two men never saw each other again.

SALEM POOR

★ ★ ★

Born enslaved in Andover, Massachusetts, Salem Poor (1747–1802) bought his freedom in 1769. He enlisted in May 1775 and served in Charlestown, Massachusetts, under Captain Thomas Drury. Poor and other African American Minutemen built fortifications. During the Battle of Bunker Hill, the men covered those who had built the redoubt at the nearby Breed's Hill after they ran out of ammunition. As the Americans came under heavy fire from the British Regular Army, they started to retreat. Poor assisted the wounded and is said to have shot British Lieutentant Colonel James Abercrombie in the thigh, a wound that took his life the following week. For his service at Bunker Hill, 13 officers and a surgeon wrote that Poor "behaved like an experienced officer" and that he was "a brave and gallant soldier." He continued to fight, serving at the Battle of White Plains, Valley Forge, the Battle of Monmouth, and the Battle of Saratoga. Poor was discharged from serivce in March 1780, and he returned home to Andover. In 1975, the U.S. Post Office issued a 10-cent stamp in his honor.

DEBORAH SAMPSON

★ ★ ★

In the last years of the Revolutionary War, Deborah Sampson was feeling restless. A self-educated onetime indentured servant, Sampson taught children during the summer and worked as a weaver in the winter, but she felt she had more to offer the American cause. So in 1782, she took up the fight: Sampson disguised herself as a man named Robert Shurtleff and joined the Fourth Massachusetts Regiment. At 5-foot-9—taller than the average man of the era—Sampson (1760–1827) bound her chest and had little trouble "passing," though she earned the nickname "Molly" because of her lack of beard hair. She performed dangerous duties, including scouting neutral territory where Washington considered moving his troops, and suffered multiple sword and musket wounds in battle. It wasn't until a fever revealed her identity to the army that Samson was discharged honorably and returned to civilian life. She later married and had three children. Sampson was one of a number of women who fought during the Revolution. Massachusetts declared Sampson the official state heroine in 1982, marking two centuries since she joined up, and made May 23 "Deborah Sampson Day," when impersonators don colonial garb in her honor.

The Hypocrisy of Enslavement

SOME OF THE FOUNDERS BETRAYED THEIR STATED IDEALS.

BY RICHARD JEROME

George Washington surveyed enslaved laborers at Mount Vernon.

ENSLAVEMENT IS AMERICA'S ORIGINAL sin, an evil that stamped with shame and hypocrisy the Founders' professed embrace of liberty and equality for all, and one that left an anguished racial legacy that still torments the nation. Efforts failed to insert anti-enslavement clauses into the Declaration of lndependence and the Constitution. It would take more than 75 years, a bloody Civil War, and a good deal of political courage to end the institution of enslavement.

A majority of those who signed the Declaration of Independence enslaved people. Some found the practice abhorrent but, particularly in the South, told themselves that it was a necessary evil. Others openly embraced abolition, perhaps incrementally, or else evolved in that direction. Most at least saw the inherent paradox in fighting a revolution to escape tyranny and form "a more perfect union" while dooming an entire race of people to live as property—bought, sold, chained, whipped, dehumanized, and without hope.

A Dutch ship brought enslaved people to Jamestown, Virginia, in 1619. Opposite: A portrait of Isaac Granger Jefferson (1775–circa 1850), an enslaved tinsmith and blacksmith at Monticello.

George Washington

In Washington's world of Virginia planters, enslavement was a fact of life. He enslaved as many as 100 people. What made him begin to rethink his position on enslavement? At first, economics: Enslaved people needed to be fed, clothed, and housed, even when they were too young, old, or sick to work. Beyond that, the Revolutionary War exposed Washington to a wider range of views about enslavement; moreover, all the rhetoric about Americans seeking liberty and equality was impossible to reconcile with human bondage. Still, Washington failed to raise the issue as president, for fear of driving away the South, and he kept enslaved workers all his life. Only at the end, when he directed that they be freed upon wife Martha's death, did Washington put forth an anti-enslavement position.

Thomas Jefferson

In no other Founder was the paradox of enslavement more glaring. The man who wrote the words "all men are created equal" publicly opposed slavery, calling it a "moral depravity," a "hideous blot," and contrary to the laws of nature. But there was an underlying hypocrisy to his arguments: Jefferson profited immensely from human bondage, and he enslaved more than 600 people during his life. (It's also widely—if not universally—believed that he took enslaved Sally Hemings as a mistress and fathered several children with her.) Essentially, Jefferson advocated a gradual phase-out of the institution, during which enslavement would be ameliorated with better living conditions and more moderate physical punishment. But in his *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Jefferson argued that Blacks were inherently inferior to whites and that the two races could not live together. Once freed, he believed formerly enslaved people should be deported to Africa or the West Indies, lest lingering resentments spark a race war.

James Madison

Madison strongly believed enslaved people were entitled to liberty, and he proposed that Congress buy up all of the nation's enslaved people and emanci-

pate them. At the Constitutional Convention, Madison objected vehemently to a clause that would protect the slave trade. But when South Carolina and Georgia insisted on it as a condition of ratifying the new national charter, he relented. Moreover, Madison proposed the now infamous Three-Fifths Compromise: In calculating congressional representation, each enslaved person would count as three-fifths of a white person. On a personal level, Madison bowed to economic principles. He never freed the enslaved people on his Montpelier plantation in Virginia. Like Jefferson, he thought that once slavery was abolished, integration of the races would be "rendered impossible by the prejudices of the Whites, prejudices which proceeding principally from the difference of colour must be considered as permanent and insuperable." After drafting the Bill of Rights in 1790, Madison wrote a letter arguing that freed enslaved people be resettled in an African colony, affording "the best hope yet presented of putting an end to the slavery in which not less than 600,000 unhappy Negroes are now involved."

John Jay

Like other Founders who acknowledged enslavement's fundamental immorality, Jay—himself an enslaver—was an incrementalist when it came to abolition. In 1785, he cofounded the New York Manumission Society, which advocated for the freedom of enslaved people and also filed lawsuits on their behalf. Jay also believed in subsidizing Black education. In 1787, he helped start and support New York's African Free School, which by December 1788 had 56 students. As New York's governor in 1799, Jay signed into law An Act for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery. From July 4 of that year, all children born to enslaved parents would be free (subject only to apprenticeship). A quarter-century after Jay's death, renowned newspaper editor Horace Greeley credited him more than "any other man" with "the abolition of Negro bondage in [New York] state."

John Adams

The second president clearly expressed his philosophical opposition to human bondage in an 1801 letter responding to two abolitionists who had sent him a pamphlet by Quaker antislavery activist Warner Mifflin. "My opinion against [enslavement] has always been known," Adams wrote, noting that he has "always employed freemen both as Domisticks and Labourers, and never in my Life did I own a Slave." He supported the institution's abolishment in a "gradual" way, with "much caution and Circumspection." In his letter, Adams dismissed abolitionists' violent means and measures as "produc[ing] greater violations of Justice and Humanity, than the continuance of the practice" of enslavement itself.

Benjamin Franklin

Franklin evolved on the question. For decades, he held enslaved people who worked as his personal servants, and he had no qualms about running in his *Pennsylvania Gazette* notices about the sale and purchase of enslaved people. Franklin believed that Black people were inferior and uneducable—a view he moderated after the late 1750s, when he visited a school for Black children. "Their apprehension seems as quick, their memory as strong, and their docility in every respect equal to that of white children," he wrote a friend in 1763. When Franklin returned from his diplomatic stint in France in 1785, he joined and eventually headed a Pennsylvania Quaker group called the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery and the Relief of Free Negroes Unlawfully Held in Bondage. He also freed his own enslaved workers. □

Preserving America's Heritage

HISTORIC SITES ARE BEING SPIFFED UP AND RESTORED FOR THE NATION'S SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL.

BY DANIEL S. LEVY

As the United States celebrates its 250th birthday, renovations and restorations have been taking place at historic spots across the land. George Washington inherited Mount Vernon, outside Washington, D.C., in 1754 and five years later brought his bride, Martha, there. The home recently underwent its first major upgrade in more than 150 years, with the aim of restoring the house and the estate's other 11 buildings to how they appeared when Washington lived there.

In the bedchamber where Washington died in 1799, layers of 20th-century plaster and metal lath were carefully removed from the walls and ceiling, and restorers discovered most of the 18th-century lath. The surfaces were restored, and wallpaper was reproduced to match the original.

The main work on the estate took place in the cellar. The area had been ravaged by termites, and the timber frame and masonry foundation were fixed. Archaeologists also unexpectedly unearthed 35 glass bottles from five storage pits. Twenty-nine of them were still intact. Washington enjoyed fruits and spices and sometimes took with him a brandy-based drink called "Cherry Bounce," making the discovery a physical confirmation of the president's taste.

Hundreds of miles to the southwest stands Thomas Jefferson's Monticello. He started building the Palladian-style home in 1768 and continued to refine it until his death on July 4, 1826, the 50th anniversary of the Declaration. Since 2017, the Mountaintop Project has sought to return the house and 5,000-acre plantation to how it once looked.

One discovery was a windowless room alongside the president's bedroom. Since 1941, it had

MOUNT VERNON
The Mount Vernon Ladies' Association has maintained George and Martha Washington's home outside Washington, D.C., since before the Civil War. Below: As they removed paint on the cupola, restorers discovered graffiti from as early as 1823; work being done in the grand "New Room."

MONTICELLLO
Conservation being done on the exterior of Jefferson's Monticello. Nearby, work has been undertaken to restore Mulberry Row, a path where both enslaved and white laborers lived and worked.

been used as a visitors' bathroom. Based on an account by Jefferson's grandson, historians determined that it was the living quarters of Sally Hemings, the enslaved woman who is believed to be the mother of six of Jefferson's children. The room has been turned into an exhibition space to recount Hemings' life and the life of others enslaved there.

Bunker Hill Monument, where the war's first extended battle took place outside Boston in 1775, has been spruced up with the replacement of mortar on its pyramidion top and elsewhere on the obelisk. The American Battlefield Trust has set out to restore 2,500 acres of the war's battlefields. At the site of the 1777 Battle of Princeton, an apple orchard where Americans and British battled is being replanted.

Independence Hall in Philadelphia, where in 1776 the delegates ratified the Declaration of Independence and promised to "mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor," is being restored. Masonry, wood, and plaster are being repaired, and the walls are receiving a historically accurate coat of paint. ☐

BUNKER HILL
The first battle of the Revolution was in Boston in June 1775, at Bunker Hill and at nearby Breed's Hill. The obelisk, with its 294 interior steps, was set there in the 19th century, and it has been restored.

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A statue of Thomas Jefferson stands at Independence Hall before an enlargement of the Declaration of Independence.

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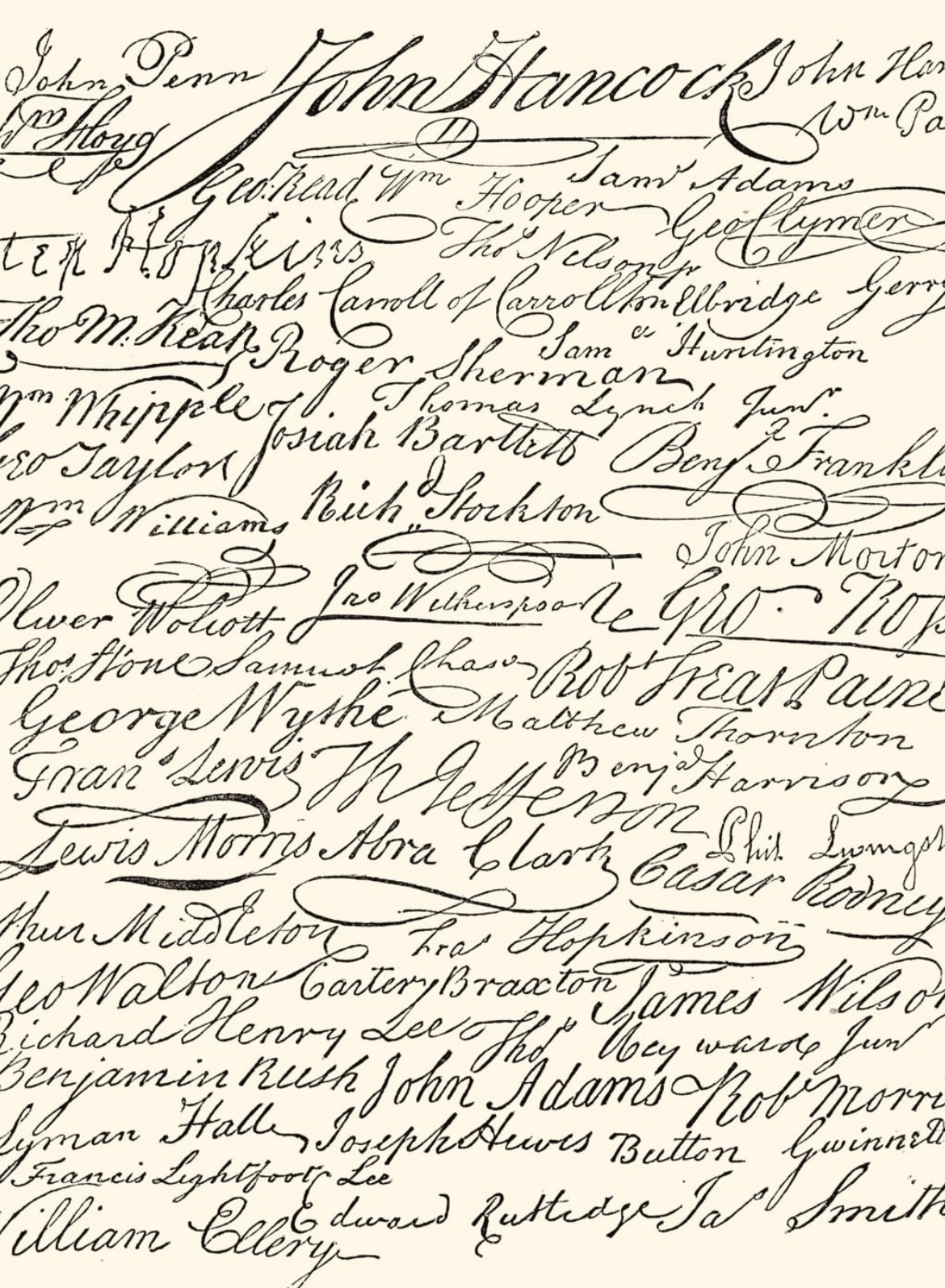
INSTRUMENTS OF WAR

The secrets of the American Revolution are still being discovered.

AMERICAN MUSKET BALLS

DURING AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL excavation at Concord's North Bridge in Massachusetts, the National Park Service in 2023 uncovered musket balls determined to have been fired by a Minuteman on April 19, 1775, during the first fight between the Americans and the British (above). At Yorktown, where the final battle was won on October 19, 1781, the cannon at right was captured when Lord Cornwallis surrendered and the Revolution ended.

BRITISH CANNON



John Penn John Hancock John Han
Wm Floyd Wm Pa
Geo Read Wm Hooper Sam Adams
Geo Clymer
Ter Hopkins Thos Nelson Jr
Charles Carroll of Carrollton Elbridge Gerry
Tho M. Kean Roger Sherman Sam Huntington
Wm Whipple Thomas Lynch Junr
Geo Taylor Josiah Bartlett Benj Frankl
Wm Williams Richd Stockton
John Morton
Oliver Wolcott Jno Witherspoon Geo Ros
Thos Stone Samuel Chase Robt Treat Paine
George Wythe Matthew Thornton
Frans Lewis Th Jefferson Benjd Harrison
Lewis Morris Abra Clark Phil Livingst
Casar Rodney
Thur Middleton Fras Hopkinson
Geo Walton Carter Braxton James Wilson
Richard Henry Lee Thos Heyward Junr
Benjamin Rush John Adams Robt Morris
Lyman Hall Joseph Hewes Button Gwinnett
Francis Lightfoot Lee
William Ellery Edward Rutledge Jas Smith

The Battle of Long Island, 1776.

Courage, Conviction, Revolution

The ideas that blossomed 250 years ago on American soil—and the resolve and determination that followed—created a nation and changed the face of the world.

George Washington at the Battle of Trenton, 1776.